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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SEXUAL POLITICS IN DELARIVIER MANLEY'S SECRET HISTORIES

by

ELIZABETH HOLLIS BERRY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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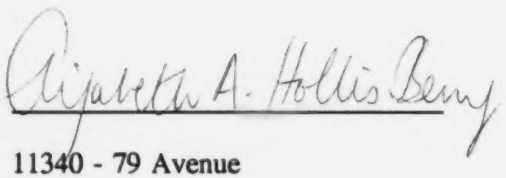

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ABSTRACT

In her prose fiction Delarivier Manley writes both for and against the established order. Her writing shows her conservative Cavalier roots, while simultaneously demonstrating her passionate opposition to a system in which women were often violently exploited. Manley's skill as a political satirist places her within the canonical scope of developing novelistic forms, while her marginal position as a wronged woman writing against the social grain allows her to claim excitingly unfamiliar territory where she is mediating herself. In her depiction of political realms and seductively gendered spaces controlled by the conquering gaze of desire, Manley appropriates and recasts contemporary critical discourse to reveal intriguing female agencies and reversed expectations. Throughout her amatory fictions Manley anatomizes an entire social system lived out in the boudoirs and bowers of the great and not-so-great. Manley's multiple narratives create a series of exploratory fictional worlds, peopled by characters who enact in satiric miniature the shifting, problematic nature of individual relationships between men and women. Defined by the boudoir's private space, these troubling relationships reflect the larger problematic balance of power in society as a whole. In her satiric anatomies, Manley explores peculiarly feminine metonymic spaces where patterns of authority emerge. Manley's narrative strategies embody a nexus of politico-moral aims and feminocentric concerns, reflected in the recurrent female figures who appear in different ontological areas throughout her "Secret Histories," as she explores epistemological questions and dramatizes sexual politics through layers of allusive text.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*****

O Sacred Truth inspire and rule my Page,
So may reforming Satir mend a vicious Age:
Whilst thy Enlightning Rays adorn and guard ye Place,
Astrea's glorious Form Surveys the Race.
And Virtue wears the bright Ormonda's Face.
The New Atalantis Frontispiece (I 521)[1]

Delarivier Manley's prose fiction shows her writing in two ostensibly opposing directions: she writes both for and against the established order. Politically, she was the Tory daughter of a Cavalier and her rhetoric is that of the patrician: educated, conservative, elegant. Socially, she was a pariah, tricked by her older cousin into a bigamous marriage, a "ruined woman," whose writings argue passionately for social change with a freshness, precision, and sexual knowing that come from beyond established categories.[2] Her satire cuts beneath smooth patrician surfaces, opening up visceral spaces and anatomizing gender roles.

Manley's writings were shocking, dangerous, transgressive, not simply because she wrote political propaganda for the Tories to condemn the sexual exploits of opposing Whigs, but also because throughout her corrective Menippean satires and so-called Secret Histories she examined the exploitation of women in a society where political violence (that is violence against men) was considered abhorrent, but violence against women was largely ignored. Manley's narrative strategies embody a nexus of politico-moral aims and feminocentric interests, reflected in the feminine cast

of her verse on reforming "Satir" at the opening of her most famous text, The New Atalantis. In this verse, images of enlightening, reforming, and mending combine with the female figures of Astrea (Aphra Behn's poetic sobriquet, also the name for Manley's character, Justice, whose narrative journey formally frames the text) and Virtue, wearing the face of Ormonda (Mary Butler, Duchess of Ormonde, aunt of the dedicatee, a name also reminiscent of Katherine Philips's pen-name, Orinda), who are prominently displayed in an engraving overlooking the text on the frontispiece of The New Atalantis. These figures emblematize the recurrent female presences who appear in different ontological areas throughout Manley's texts, their intriguing forms signifying a multiplicity of meanings: poetic or satiric, enlightening or reforming.

My purpose is to look at Delarivier Manley's prose fiction in a way that acknowledges these interwoven threads of meaning and also demonstrates the tension in her writing: Manley from within the canon—where she nods graciously at her critics—and Manley from without—whence she delightedly heaps abuse on the system. Mary Astell writes in her Serious Proposal (1696) about women abandoning "that Old and therefore one wou'd think, unfashionable employment of pursuing Butter-flies and Trifles" and daring "to break the enchanted Circle that custom has plac'd us in" (141). It becomes clear that underneath her apparent conservatism Manley's politics are gendered differently from those of the "Old": she emphasizes the political violence in sexual inequality and dares to break the enchanted circle of customary expectations.

The Enchanted Circle: Mrs. Manley From Within

Delarivier Manley knew a lot about bedrooms. She was also familiar with skeletal remains in aristocratic closets, dirty linen in Queen Anne's Court and other appropriately feminine, domestic concerns. But, in the manner of her scribbler peers (nowadays elevated to the weightier title of investigative journalists), she also knew that bedroom antics betray social or political tactics and bedrooms (like enclosed gardens or leafy labyrinths) offer a peculiarly feminine metonymic space where patterns of authority emerge. Manley wrote of all these topoi (and more) with a consciously ironic "warmth" (as she puts it in her address "To the Reader" in her play The Royal Mischief). Dismissed by some as lewdness, Manley's so-called "warmth" has blinded reviewers then, as now, to her satirical verve and native wit. What her most dismissive critics forget in their determination to place her in a limited woman's sphere—firmly ensconced in the bedroom—is that she, like Thomas More, Petronius, Burton, Rabelais, Voltaire, Dryden and Swift, knew and wrote with brio about politics and power in human society. Manley sits comfortably in this catalogue of literary Greats (although rarely offered a place) for a Polonius-style variety of reasons—her shared utopian, moral, satirical aims. Above all, her easily misinterpreted enthusiasm for examining sexual roles in boudoir, bower, and bathing-room, is, as she continually reminds us, a determined exposure of folly and "Vice" which (unlike attempts by "most Authors") aims to give the reader "an exact Notion of the Turnings and Motions of Humane Understanding" (Queen Zarah and the Zarazians, 1705 Preface, sig. A1^{v}).[3] Manley's prose fiction in her most famous

work Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes from the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediteranean (for which she was imprisoned after it was published in 1709) and Memoirs of Europe, Towards the Close of the Eighth Century (written in the following year as a sequel) offers her readers a Menippean foray, with a particular interest in the finer details of characterization ("the Turn of the Mind, Motion of the Heart, Affection and Interests" [Zarah Preface, sig. A1ᵛ]), challenging intellectual, moral and political values. The New Atalantis is, she says in the Dedication to volume II, written in the mannner of "Varonian Satyrs, on different Subjects, Tales, Stories, and Characters of Invention" (I 526).[4] In this Dedication to The New Atalantis she reinforces her critical position with a reference to two of the satirical Greats when she quotes from "Mr. Dryden's learned Discourse of Satire, in his Dedication of Juvenal" (I 527) which also implies her underlying interest in gender roles:

> 'What is most essential, and the very Soul of Satire, is scourging of Vice, and Exhortation to Virtue. Satire is of the nature of Moral Philosophy: He therefore who instructs most usefully will carry the Palm. And again, 'Tis an Action of Virtue to make Examples of vicious Men.' (I 527)

Yet, despite her clearly stated satirical intentions and obvious commitment to loftier ideals of social reform, a critical opprobrium has lingered over Delarivier Manley's prose fiction throughout the centuries since her death in 1724. She has, as Fidelis Morgan points out, "always been the subject of passionate opinions," having been variously described as "a liar, a wit, a pornographer, an unenviable success, a slut, a failure" (1986 23).[5] An often dubious critical response has arisen largely from a tendency to confuse Manley's writings with her life, her public self with her

private self; thus the lubricity Manley describes is seen as her own personal lubricity, and thence critics have been inclined to misread and misjudge her. As Dale Spender in Mothers of the Novel says of Manley's autobiographical presence in her works "it is a complex business trying to separate the real romance from the romanticized reality" (1986 67). Historians have made short work of her: Trevelyan dismissed her as "a woman of no character" and Winston Churchill denounced her in 1938 (with the rhetorical thunder more befitting a literary war), defending his ancestor Marlborough against her writings which, he fulminated, were "the lying inventions of a prurient and filthy underworld, served up to those who relish them and paid for by party interest and political malice."[6] It was, as Spender indicates, far harder to dismiss Delarivier Manley in her own time when she enjoyed the interest (if that is the word) of the most prominent figures, from the Queen herself (ruefully informed in a letter from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, that there was some truth in Manley's stories) to Swift, who wrote in his Journal to Stella in 1712 that Manley's political pamphlet on Marlborough was "the best" and she had "a great deal of good sense and invention."[7]

Pope, having slighted her as a "noted common woman," chooses Manley's most famous work The New Atalantis as a measure of the eternal in popular fiction. In The Rape of the Lock eternity is "as long as Atalantis shall be read" (III.165). Whereas Pope's point was to show her ephemerality, historically, at least, if not theoretically, Pope's judgement could be said to have hit the mark, for Manley's prose fiction occupies a place of lasting significance in the development of the novel.

Although Patricia Köster's 1971 edition of Manley's prose fiction is given the title Novels, Delarivier Manley is not even mentioned in leading studies of the novel's development, such as Watt's authoritative The Rise of the Novel (1957). Perhaps the reason for Watt's omission is his teleological bias which applies Mannheim's social theory of knowledge (from Ideology and Utopia 1914, 27) to a selective group of writers—Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Watt's method tends to sum up the pluralistic early eighteenth-century entirely in terms of a rising middle class whose triumph is mirrored in the rise of the novel. There is no room for Manley in Watt's study because only a limited number of writers (three or so) actually fit an approach which, as John Richetti suggests, reduces the period to a "rigid" scheme of social or philosophical norms ("bourgeois democracy and pragmatism") and narrative effects ("realism") valued today but imposed upon a system which flourished largely in blissful ignorance of such preoccupations (1969 4). Janet Todd refers to Watt's study as an example of "patriarchal literary history" which errs not only because it has "largely written women out of its story of eighteenth-century fiction," but also because "literature is not progressive" (1989 2). This is clearly an important point which adds weight to Todd's contention that (pace Richetti et al) Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley demonstrate a subversive sophistication in their techniques and insights which is not immediately developed or even repeated until the end of the century.[8]

If Watt's position necessarily excludes Manley (and other early woman writers) because she does not fit, then Bakhtin's analysis of the novel's development, while

not actually naming Manley, creates nonetheless a promising possibility for her inclusion in the picture. Bakhtin's studies (in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics and Rabelais and his World) emphasize the importance of Menippean satire in the development of novelistic forms and it is this aspect of Manley's writings that other critics like B. G. MacCarthy have missed. When MacCarthy dismisses Manley for "absurd bursts of ranting" and "an elephantine style" that is "dully ironic," her own critical excesses throw out a random formulation of Manley's Menippean strengths (28). If MacCarthy's exaggerated rhetoric is translated into reasonable terms one can see that this very same polyphonic, ironic expansiveness declares Manley's accomplishment as both a Menippean satirist and early novelist.

According to Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism, the quintessentially Menippean "anatomy" appears "shapeless," "disorderly" or "monstrous" (vide MacCarthy's "elephantine style"), but the appearance of carelessness that results from "violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative" is a reflection of the reader's own carelessness "or his tendency to judge by a novel-centred conception of fiction" (1957 310,313). Frye indicates that the Menippean satirist tends towards intellectual exuberance and expansion "into an encyclopaedic farrago" filled with philosophical irony, expansive digression and deipnosophistical display (311)—altogether the type of writing Manley's critics such as MacCarthy misjudge as "absurd bursts of ranting." This satirical heterogeneity and polyphony in The New Atalantis is precisely the kind of textual openness that Bakhtin identifies as essentially novelistic. Reworking Wölfflin's distinction (in Kunstgeschichtliches Grundbegriffe, 1915) between a

of textual openness that Bakhtin identifies as essentially novelistic. Reworking Wölfflin's distinction (in Kunstgeschichtliches Grundbegriffe, 1915) between a pictural, baroque or open tradition and a linear, classical or closed tradition, Bakhtin maintains that since human existence itself is a mixture of styles, "an irreducible heterogeneity" (or the Stilmischung of Auerbach's Mimesis), then true representation in art and literature must mirror this heterogeneity of human existence (Wölfflin, 1950 18-19). Thus, in the development of the novel generally and in Manley's prose fictions particularly, a tendency towards "disorderly conduct" (Frye) signals the dynamic of Menippean satire and, in Bakhtin's terms, the pictural (open, disparaging) form displaces the linear (closed, serious, official) form (Bakhtin 1929, 1940).

Here, then, is at least one reason to read Mrs. Manley with renewed interest. But, alas, in Popular Fiction Before Richardson John Richetti insists (rather rashly for one so meticulous) that Manley is "unreadable" (Richetti, 1969 262). Not only is there no hope of finding pleasure in the "style and structure" of her fiction but she, along with Eliza Haywood and "other lady novelists" can offer little wisdom beneath the "thin righteousness" of their feminism which is in Richetti's view "effective" but "bogus" (229, 262). Richetti relegates Manley to the ranks of "sorry hacks" whose fiction was geared to well known narrative or moral "clichés" and who showed "incompetence at realistic narration" (264). While Richetti reduces Manley's achievement to that of a failed realist, Jane Spencer in The Rise of the Woman Novelist has the acuity to question just whose reality these male critics seek. Spencer's point about the devaluation of women's fiction because of female novelists'

(Spencer, 1986 183). Spencer also argues impressively for Delarivier Manley's contribution to the development of the novel because Manley, like Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood, displays an experiential daring in exploring female psychology and sexuality (the expansive possibilities of selfhood) that is missing from women's novels until the end of the century, when Wollstonecraft and other Romantic women writers re-asserted the idea of woman's totality as an actively social and unashamedly sexual being.

Before Spencer's powerful analysis of Manley's role, Lennard Davis makes a case in Factual Fictions (1983) for Manley's inclusion in the novelistic picture, discussing the "interpenetration of fact and fiction that got Manley in trouble" and the exceptional centrality of Manley herself in her autobiographical The Adventures of Rivella (Davis 120-121). Not only is Manley's technique of "placing her physical body so centrally in the work," Davis emphasizes, "unique in the history of narrative," but her strategy also contributes to narrative by "greatly extending the capacity of print to embody a life" (118). In his more recent survey of the novel's development (The Origins of the English Novel), Michael McKeon mentions Manley in passing for her political purposes in transforming "history to story" through the writing of the "conservative love narrative," which, McKeon points out, alters the "progressive love narrative" by peopling it with parvenus and schemers (1987, 232, 262). Here, I would contend that Manley's narratives explore substantially more than this "conservative" narrative discussed by McKeon. Yet more recently, J. Paul Hunter's cultural study, Before Novels (1990), gives Manley a distinct place in the

history of the novel, presenting her as one who "constructed significant works of fiction of the emerging kind," and mentioning the "creative innovation" of her works; although Hunter, like Richetti, situates her with the "sorry lot" of London hacks (including Dunton and Gildon) because of a shared tendency to be "sloppy, ignorant, mercurial and uncertain of their aims" (Hunter 1990, 22,100).

Despite this dismissive statement, Hunter goes on to describe Manley as "a political journalist and controversialist" who "learned to make the half-fiction of narrative from polemical essays" (296). Ultimately, Hunter notes Jane Spencer's emphasis on the significance of Manley's writing in that "her thematic interests—in love, political intrigue, and sexual politics—helped define both the parameters of women's writing (as Spencer has argued) and the territory of the novel" (398). For my purposes, Hunter's conclusion unintentionally gestures towards a circular process (which I propose to follow in both method and theme) when he returns to both Jane Spencer's insight and to what is clearly a question of feminist enquiry, perhaps best summed up in Ros Ballaster's important study of Manley, Behn and Haywood. In Seductive Forms, Ballaster refers to the "hegemony of this triumvirate" (Defoe, Richardson and Fielding) which, she effectively demonstrates, is barely displaced by either McKeon or Davis, whose reading "produces little more than a new version of an old history of the novel" (1992 13). My argument that Manley's writing resists any single reading accords with Ballaster's contention that these amatory plots go beyond the limits of political allegory or romance by articulating, as Ballaster puts it,

"sexual and party political interest simultaneously," showing Manley reflexively questioning authority in her Menippean satires and amatory narratives (16).

Rewriting The Enchanted Circle: Mrs. Manley From Without

In the multiple narratives that make up The Secret History of Queen Zarah (1705), The New Atalantis (1709), Memoirs of Europe (1710), The Adventures of Rivella (1714) and The Power of Love (1720), Manley creates a series of exploratory fictional worlds peopled by characters whose transgressive desires present a "Display of Vice and Faction" (II 386). But Manley always scruples to point out that the display of vice in these episodic spaces in itself recommends "Principles and Virtue," opening up alternative possible worlds (II 386). From stories like that of the power-hungry Zarah and her mother Jenissa who dupe an opportunistic Hippolito (Marlborough) into the "Fatal Snare" (I 24) of marriage in his mistress's "Cooling-Room" (presented with delicious irony as made expressly for "the King's Pleasure" [I 12-13]), to the episode of an ambiguously sexed Germanicus, waiting on a yellow velvet canopy bed to take "Possession" of the rapacious Duchess de l'Inconstant in her own lover Fortunatus's (Marlborough again) "little Chamber of Repose" (I 305), Manley explores in satiric miniature the shifting, problematic nature of individual relationships between men and women. Defined by the boudoir's private space, these troubling relationships reflect the larger problematic balance of power in society as a whole. Manley explores far more than a corrupt world of courtly intrigue where (so Richetti argues) women are either innocent victims or monstrous opportunists. She

anatomizes, rather, an entire socio-political system lived out in the boudoirs and bowers of the great and not-so-great.

Manley documents the values of a society in which the threat of infidelity takes on a larger meaning than might first appear to a twentieth-century reader. As Richard Ashcraft has shown in Revolutionary Politics & Locke's Two Treatises of Government, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century saw a national hypersensitivity to ideas of faith and faithlessness, bound up with fears about the King's infidelity to the people (the Treaty of Dover), religious infidelity (popery and dissent) and the people's infidelity to the King (the Civil War). The watchwords towards the turn of the century were "secrecy, popery and despotism" and, after the Treaty of Dover (which Andrew Marvell ominously called "a work of darkness" and "a design"), the remainder of Charles II's reign was marked by "'fears and jealousies,' and the growth of anxieties aroused by real and imagined plots and conspiracies to disturb the public order" (Ashcraft, 1986 21). In view of this disordered and complex political background with its bitter anxieties that the King himself was conspiring to subvert religious and political order, Manley's challenge of political and social values is not easily reduced to that of a simple Tory polemic against the Whigs. Her rhetoric may well be that of the Tory polemic at times but it also draws on the Whig appeal to the natural law theory: the Law of Nature is God-given, preserves individual freedom from oppression, and requires the keeping of agreements. Manley's damning revelations of Whig lubricity—like that of the ruthless Marlboroughs—are not solely based on her elitist Cavalier principles, but

also on justifiable disgust at Whig politicians' hypocrisy and corruption, reflected in their abuse of women and each other. Manley's narratives of illicit desire question not just one political system but a social order where greed and infidelity, cruelty and oppression affect all people in general and women in particular.

Like Swift, who followed The New Atalantis with Gulliver's island adventures in Gulliver's Travels, Manley sets about her satiric task with all the digressive, disruptive, deipnosophistical display of a Menippean anatomist. But to the intellectual romp of Menippean satire she adds a social dimension in her study of women's sexual roles. Throughout these texts Manley plays with and exploits old forms and types—the romance, the pastoral panegyric, the learned debate, the confession, the senex amans, the hypocrite, the philosophus gloriosus, and the youthful innocent. But while she acknowledges the intellectual value of the old forms and types in evoking a lost age of "Fortitude" and "Constancy" (The Power of Love 1720), she simultaneously demonstrates their ultimate obsolescence in not getting to the topical heart of the matter: seduction-as-ruin had unarguably real consequences for women. In Atalantis I when the inexperienced Charlot (whose "brightness of Genius" often breaks out "in dangerous Sparkles" and who is significantly bereft of beauty) is deflowered and cast off by her lecherous guardian the Duke, Charlot transgresses the bounds of stereotypical purity by responding warmly to his illicit advances (I 325). But the poignant reality for Charlot and others like her is, Manley shows, that her healthy sexual spontaneity is changed in a perverse male economy to worthless coin.

Her value is lost when she gives freely of herself, so she must be abandoned to make way for a more mercenary transaction with a wealthy sophisticate.

As Patricia Köster has shown, Manley's techniques show her consciously experimenting "in the shift from romantic to realist presentation" (Novels I xxii). This plural method in Manley's writings also creates reflexive textual dialogues between the different forms, embodying a satirical meta-criticism within the narratives which are told and retold in contrasting ways. The story of the young widow's funeral—the Cary and Edward Coke episode (I 359-402)—and the story of the woman "nailed dead to the Gibbet"—told by an authentically characterized Country Woman who offers, to the visiting female eminences Astrea, Virtue and Intelligence, post-narrative refreshment of "Curds new press'd" and "excellent brown Bread" (I 420-25)—each demonstrates Manley's experimental skills. In the earlier episode Manley gives the reader an exuberantly intellectual Menippean display, raising questions about fictionality, authority, gender and genre. The narrative switches from frame to pastoral and intercalated elegy (offered by none other than the autobiographical Delia), then back to the frame; from the framing discourse a huffily critical Astrea (philosopha gloriosa) questions, in dizzying mise-en-abyme fashion, the poet, who is commenting on Delia, commenting on the official story, which is in itself questioned and then re-told. We feel the discursive tension as the narrative is pulled back to the story proper where Madame St l'Amant dies of a broken heart, torn between duty and transgression.

In the story of the Lady who "permitted herself to be abus'd by a young Soldier of Fortune" (thought to be a dig at Steele), then hauntingly becomes the "Woman nail'd dead to the Gibbet," Manley establishes a similar dramatic tension between story and discourse: the cosy domestic scene (redolent of pastoral beauty) where the "loquacious Country-woman" tells her tale in an earthily authentic voice provides an ironic contrast to the story's gruesome social truth. Initially Manley's tearful Country-woman describes how the unfortunate young woman delivers her own child in tortured isolation—"Pain after Pain, Tear after Tear, Cry after Cry . . . she is Deliver'd all-alone by her self of a brave Boy" (I 424)—and resorts to infanticide to avoid discovery: "Lest he shou'd cry, she tore out his Bowels in the Birth." After the cruel irony of this labour in vain which enacts the oxymoronic complexity of birth-death, Manley's immediate return to the framing narrative, set in the nurturing comfort of the cottage, emphasizes the poignant reality of illegitimate, unwanted childbirth (with its barbarous social impact on the 'impure' woman) by picturing an entirely different form of woman's work in similarly meticulous detail. The contrastingly sunny, domestic ideal is presented through rustic food imagery and emblematized in the figures of 'pure' women:

> The loquacious Country-woman had the thanks of her new Guests for the pains she had taken to oblige 'em. She set before 'em Curds new press'd, Cream fresh from the Cow, excellent brown Bread, and desired them to refresh themselves. The two Divinities, (who in all things were resolv'd to appear as Mortals) did not disdain her Bounty. She added to her Entertainment a Basket of Strawberries just gathered, a Pitcher of Wine from her own Cowslips of the Meadow, and Butter fragrant from the Churn. (I 425)

Nothing could be more antithetical to the picture of a shameful, bloody childbed, where the mother's milk is unnaturally stopped after the infant's bowels have been torn out, than this fragrant, wholesome world of dairy and meadow where nature's nurturing bounty and the product of woman's labour are welcomed. And nothing could be more disruptive to the pastoral ideal than the preceding episode where basic human values are, like the bodies of both mother and infant, disintegrated and discarded.

Another passage from The New Atalantis shows Manley's skill in exploring epistemological questions and dramatising sexual politics through layers of allusive text. Placed towards the beginning of the second volume of Atalantis, this episode shows Mrs. Nightwork (the midwife) assisting at a clandestine birth which takes place by moonlight beneath trees which enclose a remote place outside the city. In this marginal space, the woman who bears the child is forced (just like the Country-Gentlewoman who is executed after killing her child) by social expectations to deny the truth of her condition and in so doing to deny herself and her child the natural succour of a healthy birth. The denial in this scene is so overpowering that all the elements which combine to form the narrative are curiously disjointed, the focus moving back and forth between the observing goddesses who desire involvement in the action but can only comment on it and Mrs. Nightwork who prefers to talk but must assist the labour in secret. Under the sheltering trees which become a painful "Rack of Nature" (I 540), the woman actively bringing life into this confused world craves the annihilation of death to free her from shame (I 539-50). As the goddesses

and the midwife comment on the unfolding drama, Manley shows meanings exploded and the issues of truth and fiction problematized. The scene recalls an earlier picture at the opening of the New Atalantis's first volume where Nature is figured as a woman—lovely, fertile and generous—her grassy pastures and shady groves metonymically vaunting female sexuality and the abundant generosity of motherhood, which are here disrupted and shown in a very precarious state.

Ultimately the entire Mrs. Nightwork episode, framed by urgent exchanges about speech and action, is a dramatised sexual power struggle emblematized in the two groups—the watching deities who can see but not act, and the garrulous midwife with her client who must act but would rather speak. Natural energy is pitted against unnatural power and the power of speaking against the power of witholding speech. Here, as elsewhere in her fiction, Manley is keenly aware of the interplay between romantic and realist presentation. This episode, like the episodes of Madame de Bedamour seduced in the Garden or Madame de Caria seduced in the labyrinth, recalls the suggestive landscapes which shape earlier scenes from romance such as Spenser's Bower of Bliss, echoed here with a parodic twist. Whereas Acrasia is voluptuous, devouring sexuality expressed in images of snowy perfection and web-like treachery (her destructive power over Verdant is, as Patricia Parker shows, suggested at least partly in a suspension of his power of speech),[9] in Manley's scene the woman is not, like Acrasia, displayed erotically "all on a bed of roses" but her pain-wracked body "upon the Root of the Trees" creates a focal point for a debate on the values of reporting or witholding information (539). Manley's representations of the female

figures in this vignette express anxiety and contradiction: somehow the virtuous task of truth telling is snarled up in the avoidance of good actions, just as the painful danger of childbirth is muddled into an opportunity to entertain by telling (and showing) the failures of others.

A similar emphasis on the interplay of meanings, juggling with the spheres of truth and fiction, is developed in Manley's fictional autobiography, The Adventures of Rivella (written in 1714 after the Tory government's fall). After having rendered the ruinous misery of a bigamous marriage to her cousin John Manley in the story of the innocent Delia and the unscrupulous Don Marcus in The New Atalantis, Manley re-tells Delia's story in a different way. Jane Spencer points out that the earlier version of the story uses romance and seduction tale conventions to show a heroic but "helpless" Delia "marry'd, possess'd and ruin'd" (NA II 185) whereas the later tale of Rivella's "Adventures" shows the amorous woman far more favourably distinguished in her warmth and wit. This new woman is daring, generous and, above all, literate. Here the absent self is constructed by two would-be lovers of Rivella, the Chevalier D'Aumont and Sir Charles Lovemore, whose dialogue both lends authority to the text and opens up questions about its veracity. In contrast to the innocent Delia who is cruelly victimised in an illicit sexual relationship, the alluringly transgressive Rivella who emerges from the amorous men's conversation throughout The Adventures of Rivella is vitally sexual.

Although Richetti and Spencer suggest that after the Tories' fall from power Manley's political and literary career was essentially over because there was no

longer any need for her services in continuing a Tory polemic of abused innocence (representing the nation abused by Whig rulers), this portrait of the happily sexual Rivella, while showing delight in her transgressive (literary) freedom, is still a political statement, albeit of a subtler sort. Manley's seductive promotion of her abilities in a sophisticated (one is tempted—almost—to say masterly) elision of both her literary and amatory skills, through the dialogue of two male admirers, is a challenging reminder that even women who actively promote their own physical and mental autonomy are still most often enclosed and defined by the men in their lives. An even deeper irony here is that Manley was busily writing Rivella to save her reputation from the hack pen of Charles Gildon, who agreed to allow her the opportunity to write her own story for Edmund Curll (the notorious publisher of obscene books) if she kept his planned title and wrote for Curll's less than discerning readership.[10] Thus Manley was fitting herself to Curll's dubious requirements while telling her transgressive story through the fictional agency of two authoritative male figures (in this, Isobel Grundy notes, paralleling the male writers who adopted female personae, such as Moll Flanders or Jenny Bickerstaff in the Tatler).[11]

The narrative ends with a ludic proposition: the admiring Chevalier D'Aumont and the reader are invited to go between the sheets, as it were, both bookish and bedding, and thereby to enter the enticing space of Rivella's private world "within the Nymph's Alcove, to a Bed nicely-sheeted and strow'd with Roses, Jessamine or Orange-Flowers" (II 855). This provocative ending is itself a nicely pointed allusion to the signs that betoken femininity and its placement as a narrative climax ironically

enacts Manley's acute awareness of social expectations that limit and define women in an overwhelming concern with women's physicality. Yet Manley knows her audience well and plays the part with relish. What some critics have construed as a blatant invitation to view Manley herself as a perpetually bedded odalisque clearly misses the textual signals that question such assumptions. The text filled with subjunctive "mights" and "might haves" could only appear to the terminally dull as lubricious self-promotion, for the point is clearly made that this is "fancy" and the echoes of her earlier texts in "Pillows neatly trim'd with Lace or Muslin, stuck round with Junquils [sic]" suggest clever promotion of her literary endeavours, her enigmatically creative rather than availably sexual self (II 855).

Manley is again turning the tables on those who misconstrue her amatory narratives as themselves proving her own lubricity and limited ability, for surely the tantalizing picture opens up questions of sexual politics and can be given a more complex reading by those alert to gender issues. With a deliberately controversial conclusion, Manley beckons the reader to cross over into a seductive imaginary space where epistemological and ontological boundaries shift amusingly. Manley's Cavalier warmly exhorts "Allon's let us go my dear Lovemore . . . let us not lose a Moment before we are acquainted with the only Person of her Sex that knows how to Live," and in so doing he (she) undoes any superficial categorizing of women by physical form or fixed conventions of beddable passivity in which he has just engaged (856). Manley demonstrates through this witty exchange that after all the illicit desire and

transgressive "warmth" of her narratives, the nicely-sheeted bed is au fond a superb closing gambit in the game of fictionality played by a Grand Mistress.

NOTES

1. Delarivier Manley, Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes, from the New Atalantis, An Island in the Mediteranean (London 1709). Repr. The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley 1705-1714, ed. Patricia Köster (2 vols.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints; Gainesville, Fla., 1971), 267-804. All subsequent references to Manley's works, unless otherwise stated, are to this edition, cited as Novels and included in the main body of the text.

2. In her "Materials Toward a Biography of Mary Delariviere Manley" (University of Indiana Ph.D. diss., 1965) Dolores Diane Clarke Duff gives a summary of Manley's family background as follows:

> . . . Delia Manley was the third child and second daughter of the second son of Sir Richard Manley of Wrexham and Erbistock, Denbighshire, Sir Roger Manley. Her mother was a Walloon gentlewoman of whom almost nothing is known. Living at the time of Sir Roger's death were Sir Francis, who died almost immediately after, and Major John Manley. . . . In Truro, Cornwall, Delia's cousin, John Manley was a barrister and husband of Ann Grosse, an heiress, perhaps the beauty of Pope's acquaintance. His brother Isaac was Postmaster of Ireland, and an acquaintance of Swift. The sister of John and Isaac, Margaret Manley Davies, was a resident of Wrexham, a follower of Morgan Llwyd's sect. (23)

It is thought likely that the bigamous marriage between Delarivier and her cousin John Manley (later a member of parliament) was made possible largely because of the fundamentally nonconformist views of this Wrexham branch of the family (considered a "blot on the escutcheon" of the passionately royalist Manley family), who were clearly inclined towards the theory of concubinage in a sect whose leader, Morgan Llwyd, was so fanatical that, Duff points out, Cromwell himself had to order the local elders to accept Llwyd as their pastor (19,63). Certainly Manley's cynical observations on the evils of polygamy in her stories of Louisa, Zara and the Volpone (Cowper) brothers (Atalantis I 485-518) would indicate her own bitter experience at the hand of a man who left her in desperate circumstances with an illegitimate son and little or no support, while he continued his life as a successful (married) politician without suffering any impediment to his position of comfortable acceptance in the world.

3. John L. Sutton shows that the preface to Queen Zarah is not an original treatise by Manley but a literal translation of the abbé Morvan de Bellegarde's Lettres curieuses de littérature et de morale—a French "courtesy book" published in 1702. Sutton also points out that de Bellegarde's essay is itself a paraphrase of the second part of sieur du Plaisir's Sentiments sur les lettres et sur l'histoire (1683), regarded in France as "an event of major importance in the development of a coherent theory of the novel" (167). Sutton's argument is that Manley's use of de Bellegarde's text (addressed exclusively to women in a language with which she was very familiar) is further proof that she is indeed the author of Zarah. See John L. Sutton, "The Source of Mrs. Manley's Preface to Queen Zarah," MP, 81 (1984), 167-72.

4. In Manley's Dedication the italics occur in reverse, forming the main text.

5. In A Woman of No Character, Fidelis Morgan traces Manley's known history and intercuts the few facts with excerpts from Manley's own writings to give a representation of Manley's life in a clever patchwork of life and letters, fact and fiction. Morgan deals with the issue of Manley's first name (variously written as "Mary de la Riviere" [erroneously in the Dictionary of National Biography], Delariviere, De la Rivier, and Delarivier) which she indicates was written as "Delarivier" in the 1696 Dedications to Letters and to The Royal Mischief, twice in her will and on her tombstone. The tombstone I have also seen and am persuaded that en balance a name which is consistently spelled in a certain way on both will and tombstone is probably the right one.

   Patricia Köster provides impressively corroborating evidence from records of the time that the name Delarivier would not only have been known to the family of Sir Roger Manley during his duties as lieutenant-governor of the island of Jersey (where his second daughter Delarivier was born) but was the name of a superior officer's wife—which, when one is steeped in the hierarchical systems of army life, seems as good a reason as any for choosing such an unusual name. See Patricia Köster's helpful article in "Delariviere Manley and the DNB: A Cautionary Tale about Following Black Sheep with a Challenge to Cataloguers," Eighteenth Century Life 3, (1977), 106-11.

6. Churchill also referred to Manley as "the notorious Mrs. Manley" (1938 I 132). Instead of acknowledging her abilities as a successful pamphlet writer (whose pamphleteering skills Swift greatly admired) or her partnership with Swift in the production of the Examiner, Churchill dismisses her as a mere tool, conveniently schooled in the art of insult for Swift who "used her to write obscenities and insults beyond the wide limits which he set himself" (Marlborough His Life and Times, 1947, IV 367).

7. Swift's comments about Manley's pamphlet writing are recorded in his Journal to Stella of October 22 1711 (Letter 32) in which he acknowledges receipt of "a set of Examiners, and five pamphlets, which I have either written or

contributed to, except the best which is The Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough, and is entirely of the author of the Atalantis."

Swift and Manley became friends as well as literary partners. In his Journal to Stella of January 26-February 9 1711/12, Swift writes of her illness and her abilities:

> Poor Mrs. Manley the author is very ill of a dropsy and sore leg; the printer [Barber with whom she lived at the end of her life] tells me he is afraid she cannot live long. I am heartily sorry for her; she has very generous principles for one of her sort; and a great deal of good sense and invention: she is about forty, very homely and very fat. (Letter 40, January 28)

8. Todd discusses Manley's strategy of countering the narrative of "female distress following defloration" and uncovering "its assumptions" (84). Along with many helpful critical insights, she also makes a useful general statement about "female fiction" which she sees as

> beginning with an analysis of female signs and masks, as well as the social and moral effects of sexual desire and manipulation. It then proceeds to a moralistic—later fantastic—colluding with the growing ideology of femininity, preaching and greatly rewarding self-sacrifice and restraint. But if fiction might appear to decline as an analysis of life and increase in wish-fulfilling appeal, by the end of the century it seems to gain a new stregth from an assumption of the moralist's authority. (2)

See The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800, 1989.

9. Patricia Parker's analysis of this episode in Book II of The Faerie Queene refers to the iconography of Venus and Mars, and links lyric with power thus: "The suspension or hanging of these instruments reiterates the suspensions of the Bower itself, and the hovering of Acrasia as she cannibalistically "pastures" her eyes upon her powerless subject" (54). She goes on: "The evocation of these pairs of dominant female and subject, even castrated, male in the episode of Verdant's suspended instruments works with other elements of the description to establish the Bower as a predominantly female space—whose enclosures suggest the hortus conclusus of the female body—and a place that might excite the knight to forget his own higher purpose, an act of submission that would suspend his 'instruments'" (58-59). See Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property, 1987.

10. Fidelis Morgan quotes the texts of Manley's letters to Curll upon their agreement that Manley herself should write Rivella. The letters show that Manley was in some haste ("I am resolved to have it out as soon as possible"), and, in order to avoid Barber's discovery that she was working for his rival, she was writing in secret. A week after her first letter on 15 March 1714, she writes asking Curll to pity her, "for I am plagued to death for want of time and forced to write by stealth," and requesting the time "to finish it with the éclat I intend" (Morgan 154). The letters are quoted in Curll's introduction to the 1725 edition of Rivella, entitled Mrs Manley's History of her own Life and Times, iv-vi.

11. References to Isobel Grundy's notes are taken from her many detailed comments on this manuscript.

CHAPTER 2

The Architectonics of Seduction

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> Since seduction never stops at the truth of signs, but operates by deception and secrecy, it inaugurates a mode of circulation which is also secretive and ritualistic, a kind of immediate initiation that plays only by its own rules.
>
> (Baudrillard "On Seduction" 1988 160)

> If your Highness pleases to repair to the Garden upon the Seine, you will meet a Person in the Grotto of the Nyades, who has Commission to lead you to a Diversion more pleasing than that of Walks and Fountains: The time is to morrow at six, tho' the Ev'ning prove never so fine, there are ways to make the Night more delicious! Adieu young Hero, I hope old enough not to want Courage to try the meaning of such an Assignation, you are made for Adventures—when will you begin? Memoirs of Europe (Novels II, 514-15)

This epistolary example of seduction—which Baudrillard claims is "that which extracts meaning from discourse and detracts it from its truth" (1988 149)—comes in the form of a "Billet" from an older woman to a young "Prince" in Manley's story of Arethusa and Endymion, whose very names conjure up classical worlds where seductive female powers hold sway. At the prompting of the seductively articulate Princess Ethelinda (in whose tented pavilion the company has gathered), this story of an intriguing "Adventure that has something in it rare" (II 497) is offered as "be[t]witching" (bewitching in more ways than one) entertainment to its audience of prominent male political figures by Madamoiselle Charlot [sic], one of Princess Ethelinda's maids who has her own enticing qualities as a narrator accomplished in the wit of narrative seduction: "Charlot has an Air of Sprightliness, is master of her

Subject, has much sincerity, and does not want Wit" (II 497). The "something rare" promised by Ethelinda is the affection and "compliance" of a husband whose wife seduces a young lover under his very nose, accomplishing a relational surface which (in the manner of a Rococo trompe l'oeil) is to be seen but not believed.

Manley's writings abound in seduction narratives, told for the purpose of persuading or leading astray, enticing the listeners this way or that, and sometimes convincing readers as didactic Awful Warning. Since seduction means enticing into one place or "notional area" (C.S. Lewis's phrase for a fictional world)[1] from another, or, as its Latin root indicates, simply leading away, then inherent in the idea of the young Endymion's seduction by Arethusa (the powerful older woman) is the passage from one space to another—from an innocent, asexual space to one of sexual experience. In the seduction narrative generally, the seducer persuades the seduced to pass over an imaginary boundary from one kind of world—non-sexual (or, perhaps pre-sexual), virtuous, or innocent—into another kind of world—sexual, or corrupt. This idea of leading from one kind of space into another requires a particularly spatial quality in the text itself, or a text filled with multiple narratives which create the spaces of plural fictional worlds.

When Doreen Maitre refers to a fictional world as satisfying "certain coherence criteria" and the reader's applying "certain plausibility criteria" she points the way to a connection between seduction and possible world theory. Just as Maitre acknowledges Sartre's theory of imagination in her Literature and Possible Worlds (1983 29), Manley responds to contemporary theories such as Addison's essays on

Pleasures of the Imagination (written before the full text was printed in The Spectator of 1712) which emphasize the power of the mind to "raise" or construct imaginary realms, informed by the "Force" of a seductive text and filtered by a controlling gaze: "Quatenus hoc simile est oculis, quod mente videmus," reads Addison's epigraph from Lucretius for Spectator 416, in which he discusses those "Pleasures of the Imagination which proceed from Ideas raised by Words" (27 June 1712).[2] In her depiction of political realms and seductively gendered spaces controlled by the conquering gaze of desire, Manley appropriates and recasts contemporary critical discourse to reveal intriguing female agencies and reversed expectations.

Whereas Thomas Pavel explains that fictional worlds are "the main repositories of structural features employed for referential purposes" (1986 61), Lubomir Doležel's earlier definition of the text's need to construct "its own domain of reference," thus bringing its "fictional world into existence," stipulates that it is from the inherent ontological resourcefulness of the text alone that a fictional world may be constructed (1984-5 261).[3] In this stipulation he outlines a dynamic that also suggests a potential relationship between story and seduction: just as each story seduces the reader, each seduction necessarily creates its "own domain of reference" and cleverly constructed fictional world. The ontological resourcefulness of the seducer's story operates on the subject (listener, narratee, or victim) to promise or suggest the enticing space of another world, to which the listener then applies (in Maitre's terms) plausibility criteria with varying degrees of success. Manley shows throughout her amatory, seduction-as-ruin narratives that to the victim's vulnerability (and the

narratee's ears) the seducer represents a narrative world slightly but significantly different from its actuality, or even offers an altogether different possible world to the listener, pretending that it is the world-as-actual within the text.[4]

If each story or fragment of a story can be construed as a possible world, then each twist in the tales told about the world-as-actual within the narrative could be seen as pointing to the possibility of another world altogether, and one, moreover, which the listener would rather be in, or at the very least would rather acknowledge as actual. The notion of fictional worlds allows for the definition of endless "states of affairs" (according to Pavel, Plantinga, and Doležel)[5] existing within and beyond the text: reflections and counter-reflections, departures from the actual world, based on available logic but glancing off the domain of actuality towards distant but discernible domains, planets or universes.

Perhaps the unifying narratological feature of these seductions is the willingness of those who are seduced to be transported into another fictional world, allowing themselves to indulge in or be swayed by what Addison might have defined as "those Pleasures of the Imagination, which proceed from Ideas raised by Words." Narrative procedures themselves, like the seduction scenes they describe, create magical, ontologically playful possibilities which probe the potent realms of mind, devising new worlds in the manner of Merlin's "looking glasse, right wondrously aguized," conjuring a utopian distance, "Like to the world it selfe, and seemed a world of glas" (Faerie Queene III.ii.19), wherein the quasi-actual can coexist with the patently

fantastic. Whereas this concept of fictional worldhood is exploratory (allowing for the questing or expansive potential of mind), the idea of seduction, or narrative entrapment, is essentially restrictive. The seducer offers an expansive possibility to the victim by appealing to those realms of mind which engage in exciting voyages beyond actuality, but the effect of the seduction is to diminish the victim's ontological space. Although apparently promising the opposite, the seducer contrives to restrict the victim's world by shrinking available possibilities through controlling and limiting the subject's view and experience. This narrowing of experiential scope sometimes operates permanently—resulting, say, in death—in Manley's tragic narratives (such as the story of Charlot who is destroyed by the Duke), or temporarily—the action spaced, augmented or dilated to allow for some resolution—in the case of narratives like the story of Arethusa and Endymion which tend toward the comic.[6]

Setting the tone for the story of Endymion's seduction by Arethusa, Manley discusses at some length the atmosphere of freedom which prevails in the court of Charles, "King of the Franks," where Arethusa's husband, Cornutus, has secured the post of ambassador through nepotism. Having been thus alerted to a hint of weakness in Cornutus's character, we are then told that women learn to cultivate a peculiarly sexual power at this court which follows the monarch's esteem for "Love and Gallantry" (II 499). In this place significantly beyond the borders of "the Empire," (II 502) women learn to break through traditional boundaries of behaviour or appearance and pass freely into a sexually liberated space where "There is to be found such Freedoms, such an Air, or rather Spirit of Love, not to be equal'd in any other

Place" (II 500). Here in this realm set aside for love, where women become "such wonderful Mistresses" in the art of inspiring passion, and "so embellish'd by Dress, so taught to look, to speak, to languish to advantage, that they become irresistible," Arethusa learns the art of seduction and Cornutus learns to encourage her in its pursuit (II 500).

This is a place of spatial dislocation; just as the illusionistic surfaces of Rococo art and architecture seem to make a reality of the unreal, the space within which these characters move is not what it seems:

> There is to be found such Freedoms, such an Air, or rather Spirit of Love, not to be equal'd in any other Place; the Women believe themselves born for no better Purpose; their whole Desires are to inspire that Passion; their only Business how to accomplish themselves; they really are such wonderful Mistresses in the Art, that they follow Nature but in one Point, so miraculously improving the Face, that after rising from their Toilet, you wou'd not believe it the same; so embellish'd by Dress, so taught to look, to speak, to languish to advantage, that they become irresistible. Nor does a marry'd Woman scruple to receive the publick Addresses of a Lover, which the Husband is so far from giving himself any pain at, that he looks on it as a Merit in his Wife, as if she could not be Lovely without Adorers, and consequently not deserving his Passion; tho' he does not fail to repay that Adoration in kind to some other Beauty:
> Thus the eternal round is Loving and being Beloved; yet all esteem'd Innocent, 'till some publick Indiscretion forces 'em to see what they would unwillingly believe. (500-1)

Tending to create a reversal of normal expectations that leaves participants such as Cornutus "transported at those Embellishments" into promoting his wife's gallantry at his expense, the eternal round that influences these characters' development suggests the power of artful seduction to shape reality.

Written into this concern with seduction and art is a complex of other associations that Manley sets out in a poem, directed by Charlot, the narrator, to the listening "Lordships," with the injunction "be pleas'd to take his Character, as it was said to be writ Extempore by Charles himself."

> "He Laughs and he Grins!
> "He Dances and Sings!
> "But prove him, He's a foolish Delusion.
> "Nor Answer, nor Question,
> "Nor Taste, nor Digestion,
> "Nor Preface, nor yet Conclusion! (II 502)

Apart from emphasizing the puppet-like insubstantiality of Cornutus, this strange little verse (inserted with typically Menippean disruptiveness into the tale within a tale) departs from the seduction motif and jumbles together other seemingly unrelated issues that Manley treats repeatedly throughout these seduction narratives. From the stress on appearance and action in determining character ("He Laughs and he Grins!/He Dances and Sings!"), the emphasis in the verse moves to images that suggest questions about art, illusion, and fictional boundaries: "But prove him, He's a foolish Delusion/ Nor Answer, nor Question,/Nor Taste, nor Digestion,/Nor Preface, nor yet Conclusion!" Within the ludic reflexivity of a text that plays upon its literariness while pretending extemporaneous orality, one can see Manley's writing take on the "volcanic" feminine, as Cixous explains it, jumbling the order of space and opening up the expansive possibilities of fictional worlds.

The story of Arethusa's seduction of Endymion (which she accomplishes despite a doating husband and entirely à sa barbe), shows how different fictional worlds come into view, serving what Pavel calls the "kaleidoscopic multiplicity" of

fictional texts, sometimes used for "mimetic purposes, in order to gather relevant information or just for the pleasure of recognition" and sometimes "destined to provide a sense of dizziness and playful transgression" (Pavel, 1986 148). The worlds evoked by Manley's texts often appear strikingly actual, then fade back into the overall background of a myriad stories that constitute fictionality, just as the architectural illusions of a Rococo ceiling seem real but dissolve into a structural background that renders the tectonic, in William Park's words, "atectonic" (Park, 127).[7] Endymion's name itself offers a brief glimpse of an ancient mythical world where the beautiful youth is manifestly enthralled by a supernatural female power that seduces him, leading him away from normal existence to such an extent that he is permanently held in a position of sexual availability. Like the fictional worlds Pavel says are used to "gather information or just for the pleasure of recognition," this world of classical antiquity provides informative parallels for Manley's narrative wherein Arethusa's "lovely Boy" of eighteen is "the Favourite- Adonis, to each desiring Venus of the Court" (505). Arethusa's passionate hold over her Endymion mirrors the absolute sway of the moon goddess over the Greek Endymion, whose very existence is shaped by her desire, her supernatural power holding him captured in eternal sleep on a mountain top, the more easily to embrace him with a paradoxical lux perpetua of love and death.

In addition to providing the reader with a tradition of seduction—or leading away—these other fictional worlds Manley alludes to in the narrative give us a sense of the power of female sexuality combined with a curiously provocative male

passivity. These fictional worlds of antiquity map out peculiarly female potency that endures over mountain top or river, above or below ground, where neither Endymion nor Adonis is able to resist the desires of Selene, Venus or Persephone. Manley's strategy here again exemplifies the feminine text that, according to Cixous, takes pleasure in "dislocating things and values, breaking them all up, emptying structures and turning propriety upside down" ("The Laugh of the Medusa" Signs 881). Whereas the idea of seduction has come to imply the seduction of a weaker (female) by a stronger (male) figure, in each story about seduction mirrored forth by the Olympian worlds Manley conjures up in these classical allusions, the dynamic is reversed, so that paradoxically looking back to a golden age past, she looks forward to a new age when female sexuality is powerful and unpunished.

This sense of looking both back, with wistful longing to the past, and forward with directed desire to the future is expressed in the way Manley focalizes Arethusa's impressions of the beautiful young man, who seems to be youth incarnate, "the lovely Endymion Redolent of Youth" (II 505). Through Arethusa's eyes, Endymion's form recalls an ancient paean of praise for the "unsullied! unfaded!" glories of youthful inexperience and natural vigour:

> Arethusa beheld the lovely Endymion Redolent of Youth! she saw the Flower just op'ning on the Bough, Crown'd with the early Beauties of Spring! unsullied! unfaded! the refreshing Dew not exhaled by a Meridian Sun. The Goddess Nature shew'd us her most Masterly Hand, when she produc'd Endymion; nor had the Ladies any Security in conversing with him, but the greenness of his Age, Ignorance of his own Power, which withheld him from attempting to prove its Extent.
> (II 505-506)

The imagery here recalls ancient rites of spring when Adonis (the fruitful year personified) was both mourned and celebrated, the garlands of flowers and "refreshing Dew"/"Meridian Sun" combination traditionally representing rebirth linked to death.

While thus figured as the beautiful passive youth in these images of an ancient world, Endymion is also shown as a potentially active participant in his own and a putative future society, where an extension of the Goddess Nature's "most Masterly Hand" produces a gentle, loving young man who can be mastered by women (reversing the meanings of mastery) when they "lavish out the secret softness of their Sex, in favour of this young insensible" (II 506). That he is "excessively tractable and full of good Inclinations towards perfect, implicite Obedience and Improvement" promises his future initiation into the "indearing Contact" of a fully sexual, even egalitarian, partnership at the hands of a strong, experienced woman, "till a well-bred, sensible Mistress . . . takes pains to accomplish him" (II 506). This picture of a "sensible" woman, fully empowered to take charge of her situation (and his), to "Master" this "Cithera's darling" and "accomplish" the timeless impulse of Eros, is, Manley reminds her reader, not entirely lost in the mists of antiquity but visible in contemporary society where women are still regarded as good teachers: "Women are the best Masters when they place their Delight in Instructions" (506).

Although Manley's emphasis here is on the social dimension of the situation—"Instructions"—the subsequent four pages of text make it clear that a particularly erotic form of sensual delight with Endymion is Arethusa's bent.

Through Charlot's sometimes censorious narration of the events as seen from a maidservant's perspective, Manley succeeds in evoking the contrasting emotional and social spaces that describe a developing inner conflict between socially acceptable instruction and transgressive delight. Emotionally, we are told, Arethusa is increasingly drawn into a daring sexual liaison with this young man who has hitherto been socially at liberty to trespass beyond normal bounds of propriety (into the ladies' boudoir and beyond) because his youth renders him safely innocent:

> Being esteem'd too young to give Jealousy, he went every where, and at all Hours, with unsuspected Freedom. . . . Endymion might stay as late as he pleas'd; come at what Hours; say and do as he pleas'd, there was no Reflection made, no suspiscion [sic] had; Who cou'd fall in Love with him? What danger was there of a fine Lady's Excesses, in favour of a perfect Child? So he was still call'd and so Arethusa seem'd to believe him. (II 507)

Although Arethusa has already begun to enact the gestures of an erotic seduction, Manley's language shows that these emotionally charged "Excesses" are socially sanctioned when offered to an innocent, a "perfect Child" (507).

In an intensely sensual evocation of a loving union, Manley creates the impression of psychological ambivalence (the pull between two different inner worlds) through language suited to a description of mother and child but modified by the contrasting focalization in Arethusa's "Heart" of a "Pleasure" that she does not quite understand:

> She wou'd keep him after the Com[illegible]any! play with his fine Hair! let him loll upon her Lap! rest his lovely Head upon her swelling Breast! sport his Lips with her Fingers! stroke his Face! but durst not kiss him—that was too gross—yet she long'd for that indearing Contact; still as she touch'd him, Pleasure thrill'd her Heart! she glow'd! she sigh'd! she knew not what was the meaning of those Disorders. . . . (507)

The images of playing with his "fine Hair," lolling "upon her Lap," resting "his lovely Head upon her swelling Breast," and stroking his face and lips could equally well describe an affectionate mother's response to a "perfect Child." Initially, Arethusa's sexual arousal is judged by Charlot to be unconscious, just as Endymion's "Reflections" are judged not to have been "Criminal" (508). Again, Manley plays with the possibility of alternative, shifting spaces: the space that frames the mother and child, or the space for lover and beloved.

The first sign that Arethusa's "Disorders" belong to a realm other than that of motherly love is her intense jealousy of another, younger woman, a "Virgin-Wife" whose absent husband leaves her with "none at home to employ her Thoughts" other than the "lovely Endymion" (508). The reversal in Arethusa's psychological state from one of tender "Pleasure" at the touch of a "perfect Child" to one of "Torture inconceivable" at the sight of "all the Tricks that Felicia play'd to engage the Prince," signals the overpowering pull of the world of Eros in shaping her experience. She, in turn, attempts to shape Endymion's perception of Felicia by formulating a particular discourse calculated to disenchant the young man through speaking "every thing to disgust him" about a person objectified as "that Girl," who, according to Arethusa's viciously "fine Invective" has "spoil'd her own" hair to imitate Arethusa's dark hair and dresses "so awkwardly" that she can never be "in the Fashion" (509). Charlot's narratorial aside about asking Arethusa "for how much of her own Complexion she was beholding to Nature?" ironically questions her mistress's conclusion that "Art, is Art, destestable Thing! and Nature, is Nature" and suggests the seductive untruths

which are layered over a forbidden feeling in order to disguise and entrap (509). This determination to twist the truth is part of a seduction routine that relies on the superficial at the expense of underlying meaning, recalling what Baudrillard calls a substitution of "the charms and traps of appearances" for the "underlying prohibition (conscious or unconscious)" (1988 149).

Arethusa's superficially impressive "Invective" is manifestly the product of her inner struggle between the opposing roles of maternal and erotic expression. This pull between the two worlds of Eros and Virtue causes a chaotic physiological response which renders Arethusa "uneasie to all about her" and keeps her maidservant up for hours at night "to wake and watch upon the repetitions and fondness of her Passion," observing the release of powerful earthly energies that in themselves suggest the dark powers of the underworld (II 510). Charlot's view of the situation demonstrates this suggestive passage from one world to the next in her focus on the hellish retribution in store for the woman who sins by indulging in "the mortal Sin of ingaging with an other besides ones Husband" (510). This moral maidservant's conventionally prophetic warning for her errant mistress is that "the Soul wou'd immediately pass, to augment the wretched number of the Damn'd, to be eternally tormented, a never-ending state of Reprobation! Horrible! and Tremendous!" (510).

Through Arethusa's appetitive response to Charlot's warning of eternal torment in hell, Manley shows the facile disruption of moral meaning brought about by the seducer's determination to superimpose an alternative world or reality by ignoring or subverting accepted familial, moral signs. Manley's choice of classical imagery to

underscore the appeal of youth's sensual promise on Arethusa's part also demonstrates the tension between disparate worlds, as far apart (and, ironically, as close together) as pagan and Christian structures inevitably are. When Arethusa avers by means of Charlot's ironic censure "she was yet young enough to attempt running one delicious Race of Pleasure, not distrusting the Destinies so far, as to think they had not allow'd her Thread enough for one Amour," she metaphorically enacts a childlike urge for life in her enthusiasm for the thrill of the chase. Heartily countering Charlot's moral stance, the race imagery sets animal energy against the "airy Fantoms that cou'd never yet maintain their sway" and "Shadows" of the familial, moral place where Charlot stands (512). The passage focalized in Arethusa's excitedly confident speech gives the impression of an elemental, natural world where the impulses are those of compelling, animalistic action; projected into that space by the desire of a seductive imagination which pictures her galloping free like a mythical horse, Arethusa finds "irresistible Desire, and potent Passion, goaded her on" to run the "delicious Race of Pleasure," in the reckless abandon of youth, convinced that the fateful sisters are on her side (510, 511). Referring throughout to the classical world "where Venus was in place" (512) and "Citherea's Son is a God invincible" (511), Arethusa's enraptured vindication of her position adopts pagan language which shows divine rapture conventionally expressed in images of sexual fulfilment: "Our Glory and Duty consists in an exact Fidelity to his transporting Dictates" (511-12). Manley achieves a dual irony in presenting Arethusa's fervently hedonistic argument through the conscientious narrative of this sensible, witty, moral maidservant. Charlot's didactic

report sets the earthy natural world, conjured up by allusions to the "enchanting Rhetorick and powerful Lays" of antiquity (including pagan theology), in opposition to contemporary "Religion" with its mandatory "Repentance and Absolution" without which, Charlot insists, the soul of the adulteress "wou'd immediately pass, to augment the wretched number of the Damn'd" and with which, of course, there would be no story to tell (510).

The interplay of these antagonistic worlds is further emphasized in two lines of verse offered by Arethusa in her defense:

> Touch not, Taste not, what is freely given,
> Is but their niggard Voice, disgracing bounteous Heaven. (511)

These lines (48-49) from "The Spleen" by Anne Finch, Lady Winchilsea (a poet much praised and quoted by Manley in Atalantis), present a disordered view of life (here focused on religion in particular) engendered by the power of spleen to puritanically twist or pervert heaven's gifts: "And some restraint implied from each perverted text" (line 47). Arethusa's quotation indicates a reversal of generous (noble, cavalier) principles or appetitive values in an entirely antithetical world picture where even heaven's goodness is denied by the moralists ("Mistaken Votaries to the Powers Divine" [52]) who belong (according to the poem) "in cells reclused" (51). Not so Arethusa, who intends to escape the inconveniently "niggard voice" of her faithful maidservant's warnings and embark upon a compelling adventure of "delicious" proportions, anything but reclused (514). In Arethusa's fervent attempt at rationalising her passion she not only refers to the sanction of a "bounteous Heaven"

(and the authority of a female poet) but also to the force of a conversion experience: "A feeble Inclination I might have withstood, but the whole Godhead rush'd at once upon me" (512). In this convenient elision of images, the powerful pagan god of love becomes all, "the whole Godhead" indicating a concept of divine sanction that departs from any closed puritannical notions of chaste spirituality.

In a direct reversal of gender ideology (woman created for man's use), what Arethusa perceives as her divinely sanctioned mission to nurture Endymion's sexuality, to "instruct his Youth, awaken his Attention, and teach him the use for which that glorious Form of his was made," is accompanied by a similar wish to transform herself "that I could but be metamorphos'd into the Thing most pleasing to Endymion's Fancy" (513). This urge for metamorphosis is emphasized by the allusive name of Ariadne—"that audacious Rival Ariadne," who "assum'd the Dress of Innocence, to steal his from him"—which performs a dual function in the text (513). Focalizing Arethusa's jealous regret that her "Modesty" has denied her the chance to claim Endymion's virginity, "the Pleasure of giving him his first Impression, the first transporting touch of Joy," the figure of Ariadne also recalls the classical world of labyrinthine passages and sexual transgression conjured up by the mythical allusion (513). These opposing worlds of the godly and the pagan provide a background for the seduction which begins immediately after Arethusa has simultaneously dismissed and engaged Charlot in her plan. In this chaotic dynamic she enacts a dismissal of traditional moral values coincident with an engagement with the supernatural imperative of pagan physicality (here made to tie in with developing

concepts of natural law). Charlot is dismissed as the "awkward, godly, good-for-nothing Girl" (514), both inconveniently godly and usefully subservient, while she is engaged to "Contrive, advise, do something for thy Mistress's Happiness," thus becoming the "dear easie Method," the "soft Contrivance" to secure her mistress's "Happiness" (513). Charlot's fussy deliberations and ready availability for service as the go-between in this affair mark her as a stock comic character who, in the mould of Jenny, the managing maid to Mrs. Flywife in Mary Pix's The Innocent Mistress (1697) is instrumental in arranging her mistress's affairs of the heart. A leading argument against crossing the boundary into promiscuous activities in such situations is, as Fidelis Morgan points out in her introduction to Pix's play, that it causes "so much extra work for the servants," a complaint typically expressed by Charlot and predictably ignored by Arethusa (Morgan, 1981 263).

Another boundary that Arethusa is able to pass over with relative ease is that between propriety and desire. She manages to alter the outward evidence of her desire and its actualization, performing various transgressive acts of metamorphosis for the purposes of manipulation and disguise. Arethusa enlists Charlot's help in twisting the outer signs of her desire in order to bypass propriety (both social and marital signs of ownership) by performing an act of actual sign-altering. She persuades Charlot to alter the signs of her "Hand" in Endymion's seduction by engaging her to "transcribe a Note," writing to Endymion on her behalf a "Billet" which sets out the directions for their clandestine tryst in the "Grotto of the Nyades" (514).

The physical dimensions of the seduction are implicitly set out in this note which promises a meeting in "the Garden upon the Seine . . . in the Grotto of the Nyades," an enticingly invaginated space which offers in "a Diversion more pleasing than that of Walks and Fountains" a metonymic embodiment of the provocative liquidity along the pathways that lead to sexual fulfilment (514). Along with the pregnant promise of a "delicious" night is a challenging tone which dares the "young Hero" to prove his manhood or "Courage" (514) and demonstrate his readiness for such "Adventures" (515). What Arethusa's note offers so demonstrably is the passage from one space of relative inexperience and innocence to another of sexual knowing:

> "Adieu young Hero, I hope old enough not to want Courage to try the meaning of such an Assignation, you are made for Adventures—when will you begin? 'Tis loss of that invaluable Time, which when once fled, you with all your Charms will not be able to recover! Adieu with the utmost Longings and Impatience." (514-15)

Her "Billet" outlines an initiation not only into the pleasures of a sexual adventure but also into "the meaning" of manhood itself. Written into the familiar carpe diem motif, ironically offered by the female seductress, the actuarial images of "invaluable Time," "loss," and recovery give a twist to her role in empowering the youth and indicate the implied meaning of masculine, rather than feminine, possession: her "Longings and Impatience" to both possess and be possessed by him will enable him to capitalize on his masculinity, embodying all its implications of appetitive expansion into the material and sexual dimensions of ownership.

That this proves an irresistible challenge for the eager young man is demonstrated in his reply, which Manley structures around the image of the tabula

rasa. Endymion's response to Arethusa's offer represents him as a blank page which has now been "impress'd" by Arethusa's persuasive hand, her "delicious Billet," which has inscribed "Curiosity" upon his imagination and has opened up the possibility of writing a new narrative for a "Heart and Mind" which are "yet blank Paper" (515):

> "Since the Character and Stile is stamp'd by the softer Sex, there can be no dispute of Obedience, my Heart and Mind are yet blank Paper, there was not so much as Curiosity writ upon it, 'till your delicious Billet impress'd it. Young as I am, I hope to give you a good account, both of my Courage and Willingness to improve Time, which in your Company I may perhaps begin to think as Invaluable as you seem to name it. Since it is so fleeting, let us, my lovely Adventurer, lose none of its precious Moments." (515)

In this reply, which playfully suggests Arethusa's power as author of Endymion's sexual initiation, impressing her appetite for sexual adventure upon his "yet blank" uninitiated self, the idea also comes across that the youth is offering himself up for improvement in a peculiarly material sense. While Arethusa is opening up the possible world of Eros, to be written on the blank paper of an obedient "Heart and Mind" (the idea of a playfully creative female imagination countering the convention of a controlling male gaze figured in Addison's predominantly masculine "Pleasures of the Imagination"), Endymion sees the pragmatic opportunity for his passage into the world of adulthood; the images of giving "a good account" and his "Willingness to improve Time" which he may think "Invaluable," together with the desire to "lose none of its precious Moments," suggest an investment in his future which will be shaped by a female hand.

Set suggestively in the spring, when May, personified as a seductive woman "dress'd in all her pride of Beauty" has "call'd to taste her Charms and delicious Fragrancy," the episode reflects the meaning of seduction on different levels, from invitation to initiation. Implying ancient initiation rites, this Maytide setting also suggests the kind of ritualistic metamorphosis, the "immediate initiation" both "secretive and ritualistic" that Baudrillard attributes to seduction as a "mode of circulation" (1986 160). The amorous encounter takes place in Cornutus's "newly taken" house, appropriately a "House of Pleasure," significantly spaced "ten Miles from the City" and prepared specifically to "restore" Arethusa's health (515). The story itself progresses along two spatially parallel lines: the safe spaces of the ruse and the perilous spaces of Arethusa's actual journey. Thus the world of the ruse is structured by the bedchamber in town where Arethusa has seemingly "gone to Bed indisposed," the coach where Charlot's sister is disguised as Arethusa, "close veil'd and dress'd in some of my Lady's Cloaths," and the Villa's "best Apartment" where the two meet in what is passed off as "an innocent Frolick" (516-17).

Manley reminds her readers that although the danger clearly adds to the affair's excitement, the possibility that these two worlds might collide, thus exploding "the Secret" covered so skilfully by the maid, makes Arethusa's excursion a "dangerous Salley" with serious social consequences (517). Between the bedchamber, the coach and the Apartment, the journey is coloured with possible realities that inform Charlot's story: the surface reality of the good wife going to bed "indisposed," leaving the city "close veil'd," for the Villa "in hopes the Air might do her good" is

ironically paralleled by the underlying reality of the daring lover who rides out as a man on horseback, unveiled and unconfined, seeking to do herself "good" not with "the Air" but with the singularly corporeal form of a young man (517). Arethusa's outpouring of pent-up emotion expresses the social verity of these contrasting realities: in her ecstatic speech to Charlot, Arethusa outlines the unmitigated distance between society's restrictive (even destructive) world of arranged marriage, decried as "nauseous Hymen—abhorred Constraint" and the world of erotic freedom, "the Extract of Delight" which unyokes women:

> But when we were alone, she flew into my Arms, hung about my Neck, kiss'd me a thousand times, and in all the Transports of a Person possess'd, thank'd me for the only happy Night of her Life. Ah dear Charlot! cry'd she, when she could begin to speak plain Sense, what a difference?—Eh, who would marry—or pass a whole Life in insipidity—nauseous Hymen—abhorred Constraint?—How I pity those of Condition of my own Sex that wear away, nay smother an Age of blooming Youth, without a taste of Joy! we are put to Bed, as our Parents direct, without one grain of Inclination! our Sweets are sacrificed without even obliging the rigid Master to whom they are offer'd! How much better is it to lie for ever alone than endure a reluctant Embrace? There is no mean in that Case, 'tis all Extasie! the end of living! the Extract of Delight! or cold insipid tasteless Duty! the heaviest part of the Yoke, the Burden of our Nights, and Sum of our Dislike: I'll no more on't! (517-18)

In this poignantly illustrative demand for sexual freedom, despite Arethusa's declarative "There is no mean in that Case," Manley again indicates an interplay between two possible worlds—the smothering, sacrificial realm of "cold insipid tasteless Duty" where woman is owned object, and the open world of life-enhancing sexual autonomy (Inclination and a taste of Joy), where "Parents" and "Master" no longer control the body (or the mind) because they no longer control the Bed.

While Charlot repeatedly recalls the world of Christian virtue (or, at the very least a world that approaches the dimensions of orthodox Christian law), and Arethusa conjures up the pagan world where the laws are those of Eros and "the Queen of Love" (521), Manley indicates that the distance betweeen the two may be negotiable through a creative, personal morality. Charlot's suggestion of a kind of private divorce, "a vow of Chastity as to what relates to his Lordship" suggests the power of the imagination to bypass social boundaries: "'tis but imagining this Husband dead, and that you are married to another" (518). The "mean" in this case, then, is the imaginative slip of the tongue which illustrates the powerful authority of imagining a structure and creating a personal reality. Arethusa's expressive words have the power to seduce her listeners no less than herself, enacting in this instance a persuasive female power that recasts the "Force" of words postulated by Addison: "that the Images which flow from the objects themselves appear weak and faint, in Comparison of those that come from the Expressions" (The Spectator, 1712 no. 416).

Charlot's attempt at "saving" her mistress's soul by advising the "vow of Chastity" is framed ironically as the choice between two evils: "if it frees you not from Impurity, it secures you from Plurality at least" (518). Arethusa's similarly ironic response emphasizes the facile slip from one perspective to another as she chides Charlot for her devout urgency to "sanctifie any thing" including this illicit union:

> This Wench is so devote! interrupted she, on my Conscience thou couldst sanctifie any thing; what dost think of leaving the Altar for nothing but a Lover's Bed? I have heard of such a Lady, she did not count one Bead the less for her becoming a Mistress! Certainly the

> more, Madam, answer'd I, she might imagin [sic] it compensated for her fault. (518)

This ironic interplay between "the Altar" (itself suggestive of both wedding and pagan sacrifice) and the "Lover's Bed," juxtaposes spiritually and morally confused spaces which simultaneously inform and escape boundaries, whether they be the borders of psycho-social ties or corporeal form. The altar allusively delineates different worlds of spirit and flesh, present and past, dissent and conformity, marriage and sacrifice; whereas the bed signifies a further double entendre as site of the woman's social confinement within marriage but also her physical liberation from (yet, paradoxically, intense awareness of) corporeal or social bounds in the transgressive acts of an adulterous union.

In this densely allusive language Manley is focusing repeatedly on changing boundaries of power that show women reaching beyond established limits. Although Manley presents this reversal of gender roles or expectations as a potential threat to social stability, condemning in women, as in men, the kind of overreaching that destroys others, her image patterns also declare an assertion of female power as animating and justified. Janet Todd points out that this power-hungry world of the scandal novel has an appealing vigour, its luxurious energy both "apalling and attractive" (1989 90). Manley's language argues for form (in the words of both maidservant and goddess) but enacts controversy in the exciting stories she tells with such enthusiasm. As she explores the seductive possibilities of stepping into different spaces, conjured up by images of alternative worlds, Manley presents female energies that enliven and enlighten, illustrated by the dynamic between constrained (social,

moral, religious) form and unbounded self-expression in the shape of the sexual "warmth" that recurs throughout her writings.

Arethusa's retold tale of her adventure with Endymion gives further scope to the idea of a powerfully configured pagan world (where the feminine principle holds sway) whose pull is far greater than the unexpressively "cold, insipid, tasteless" (518) world of formal religion presented by Charlot. Arethusa's world takes shape from a space connected with the "Nyades," whose watery depths yield psychic powers, and the "God of Love himself" (519) who guides his changed "Votary" Arethusa, "Stung by irresistable Desire," into a blameless region which she compares to the liminal space of the mad:

> Stung by irresistable Desire, wounded by his keenest Dart, I only obey'd a Conqueror, I could not resist, I was truly a Lover, not sway'd by Appetite, fantastick Lust and Meer ambition of Change, fond of Variety, and agitated only by That! then had I indeed been Vicious! Light! Unpardonable! Coquet! Vain! one who wronged the Nuptial Contract, and unpardonably offended my Lord and Husband! in a Word, one who fell, when they could have stood! threw themselves headlong from a Precipice in sport, when they might safely have reposed upon the height of it! Then, Madam, I reply'd, in your Ladyship's Sense, 'tis but being very much in Love to be guiltless of the Consequence; doubtless, answer'd she, don't you see when People are stark Mad they can commit no Crimes, or at least none that are imputed to 'em, we pity, but we do not condemn 'em, it even frees from the Sentence of the Law, tho' they break it never so much. (519-20)

This rhetorical tour de force offers an emphatically ironic rationalisation of Arethusa's actions and demonstrates the power of her words in re-shaping moral precepts. The impassioned language of moral self-justification reveals its unreliable meaning in the imagery of falling from a high to a low space, for clearly in Arethusa's too emphatic metaphoric representation of the headlong plunge from "a Precipice" which she claims

to have avoided, she protests too much a moral actuality that underlies her own story. The narrative has already disclosed that whether scaling the heights of passion or falling from grace in the act of adultery, either emotionally or morally, Arethusa has chosen to move into a space that is anything but safe; in her denial she ironically uncovers herself as one who "might safely have reposed upon the height of it" and who "fell, when they could have stood" (519).

These moral and emotional perils notwithstanding, Arethusa goes boldly forward in her quest for the delicious "Freedoms" (501) that this loving union promises. Dressed en cavalier, she goes to the Grotto of the Nyades where she enters "with a personated Boldness," finding that Endymion fully occupies the space and is "in Possession of it" (520). Arethusa's observations about the shifting balance of power in this place illustrate the boundaries that signal resistance to the seductive possibilities of either social change or sexual freedom:

> I perceiv'd he did not like, what seem'd to him, Intrusion; Men of Quality are so us'd to be respected, that they account not for change of Place, but think the same Obsequiousness their due, as well from all the World, as their Domesticks. (520)

This metaphorically female space operates as a trait-connoting metonymy of the two characters and suggests a psycho-sexual crux in images of disguise, one covertly female acting as male conjoined with another implicitly male acting as female. The two figures enact the tensions between their external roles and internal desires. Through a reversal of gender roles, Arethusa controls the situation by impersonating "Boldness" and, in an enactment of male domination, takes charge of matters, "to prevent his growing into an ill Humour," by presenting Endymion the Billet that

promises to lead the young man away from rigid formal structures to an enticing "Audience where the Queen of Love herself presides" if he will follow this ambiguously "soft Ambassador" (520-21). Although Arethusa appears "in my Man's Apparel" to be gendered equal, the switch is problematic for she still suffers the anxiety of both lover and love object ("tho' we dare all things for the Object belov'd, yet we are aw'd and trembling when near it"); although she can only be set free from the constraints of both gender and social roles by embodying otherness, her mind passes over into the daringly open world of desire less easily than her body (520). In stepping out of her given role as passive woman or chattel she enters an enigmatic space where meanings are unclear, codes are muddled, and "Heart-beatings, Hopes, Fears, Doubts" delineate a chaotic jumbling of form as much as a familiar expression of "Desires" (520). The passage of the lovers to the place of their fulfillment is thus significantly achieved through an allusively configured architectural boundary, "a back-door of the Garden that open'd into the Country," and a metaphorically involved road that takes them there "by abundance of Turnings" (521-22).

This spatial "abundance of Turnings" that leads Arethusa to her goal is mirrored in the the abundantly turning shape of the narrative itself. Manley's stories so often turn in on themselves and then twist elsewhere in focus to reveal the involved processes and twists of human intercourse. Similarly here, once the affair between Arethusa and Endymion is established in the context of Cornutus's unwittingly free indulgence of his wife's secret passion (publicly expressed in the ironic litotes "getting his Lady Admirers"), Manley moves the focus from the anxieties and jealousies of

"This Amour thus begun" (526), and all the "Spies," "Curiosity," "Pains," "Distrusts," and "Scandal" that go with the necessary "Trade of Concealment" in these tricky "Circumstances," to an intercalated story on the issue of marital control (531-2). In this parabolic narrative of "an Accident" that "happ'ned to a Bride," the prevailing economy of ownership is played out against the backdrop of an isolated country estate "many Miles distant from Paris, situated in a lonely Place, moated and secur'd by a Draw-bridge," where Amelia, "this voluntary Victim," is shut away from "Relations! Family! Friends! Diversions! Conversation! and in short, the World!" by her jealous husband Silius (535).

In conjuring up this impenetrable space reminiscent of a medieval fortress (which also symbolizes the impenetrably sick mind of an obsessively jealous man), Manley creates another fictional world that harkens back to the barbarism of the Dark Ages. Typically self-reflexive, Charlot's narrative announces the function of this world within the text as a vehicle for comparison, giving Arethusa pause to consider her comparative liberty against the "Solitude" of a captive "vertuous Wife" (535):

> There was an Accident happ'ned to a Bride much about that time, which put my Lady upon comparing the Happiness she had in a Temper so easy as was her Lords. [sic] (532)

Charlot's expository comment ascribes to the story a psychological significance that also suggests its place as an alternative emotional realm configured in male terms of possession, offering a contrasting space to the erotic warmth of Arethusa's pagan classical world, conjured up earlier in the allusions to female figures—the "Queen of Love" and the Grotto of the Nyades--whence the amorous pair set out on their

seductive "Adventure" (520). In contrast to the alluringly nubile, healthy vigour that characterizes Endymion, whose "Cheeks glow'd with conscious Red and heavenly Youth" (521), the destructively possessive Silius is characterized by disease imagery. Although he is seemingly "Transported," his "Malady" swiftly manifests itself at the wedding: "No sooner was the Ceremony perform'd, but a degenerate Coldness succeeded that noble Warmth" (533). This disturbingly familiar enactment of male power issues demonstrates the violent actualities of a world in which women are jealously guarded as objects. Embodying the ills of a sick social structure in his infected psyche, Silius questions his new bride's fidelity in a sufficiently disturbing way that she fears "the jealousy of a Temper that began to give such early and unseasonable Proofs of its Infection" (533).

This domain of enforced distance, silence and "Duty" where the husband is possessively "alarm'd" at even the unwitting touch of her priest's hand ("since no Woman of Honour wou'd suffer any Man [tho' he were her Confessor] to touch her naked Hand" [534]) is juxtaposed with the contrasting world of "Joy, Delight and Love!" initiated by the transgressive Arethusa. Artfully constructed as an ironic counterpart to this joyful space is the "lonely Place" where the singularly dispossessed young wife loses her autonomy (essentially her natural, private self) in the attempt to reclaim an unnatural (but socially sanctioned) public self dictated entirely by her deranged husband. In this sick seduction, the husband has "conducted" his wife to a demonstrably traditional place, part of the established order, the "Old Seat in the

Country," for permanent incarceration, "on condition she shou'd never desire to depart from thence" and

> endeavour only at regaining her Character, which he said she had justly forfeited by her indiscreet Freedoms, together with his Esteem, which he wou'd try to put her again in possession of, if she supported her Solitude as she ought, and apply'd her self to a chearful performance of that Duty, which was indispensible from a vertuous Wife. (535)

Strikingly untraditional, by comparison, is the place of Arethusa's liaison with Endymion, which entails an altogether different kind of touching, blending together and becoming other than the accepted, socially-imposed self. In contrast to the touch of "innocent Freedom" (535), denied or diminished by Silius in the pathetically forbidden "naked Hand" of Amelia, is the erotic touch of the two lovers who meet in Arethusa's bed at the "House of Pleasure," where, after feeling Arethusa's entire bodily self ("the whole impression of my Person"), Endymion seizes the "blessed Moments" and "at once put his Mouth to mine, his Hand to my Breast," in a re-engendered assertion of power. Figuratively opening up the epistemological possibilities of seeing and knowing by throwing "open the Curtains and the Bed-cloaths, immediately knowing me," and declaring his love for "Arethusa her self," Endymion's actions also assert the connective force of vision and imagination (526). The powerfully ironic unsexing of Arethusa, who comes to the bed's discovery space in the androgynous habit of the Principal Boy, demonstrates the seductively freeing potential of passing beyond the confines of the socially-constructed self in an exultation of unbounded personhood, expressed in (paradoxically disembodied) raw feeling.

Arethusa expresses this sense of being outside the self in language riddled with suggestively looped reversals of meaning:

> I turn'd my self to him, and laying my Arm round his Waist, grasp'd him with that Ardor, as put me out of my self, or my disguise! I sigh'd with such an eccho of Tenderness! and fell into so universal a Trembling, that all I cou'd do was to hide my Head in his Bosom, and faultring, [sic] cry'd out, dear Endymion, I am dying, if you don't forgive and love me! (526)

In Arethusa's provocative confession, Manley shows the surface patterns of words and actions disintegrating one into the other, creating an epistemological trompe l'oeil, as the narrative appears to reach a climactic point. The meaning of "I turn'd my self to him" suggests both appeasement and metamorphosis, both actively reaching and passively accepting, an unsexed giving and taking; the ardent grasp that "put me out of my self, or my disguise!" suggests variously a gendered or ungendered reaction or action that holds and frees at the same time, freeing the impersonating actor from costume, role, specific body and singular mind. The sigh is "sigh'd with such an eccho of Tenderness" that it is not clear whether this is an impersonation of a woman's expected response or a co-equal echo of the lover's tender presence; the "universal Trembling" signals a shared physical reaction that is exclusively à deux and universally familiar, reflecting a simultaneous awareness of both public fear and private pleasure; the images of "faultring," "dying," crying out, forgiving and loving suggest clusters of alternative social and personal realities. The implied meanings suggest that Arethusa is either "faultring" on the brink of a moral fall, "faultring" in her established gender role, or "faultring" in the accepted feminine mode of indecision; the image of "dying" suggests variously a surrender of personal power,

the death of reputation, or orgasmic response; crying out similarly implies sexual fulfilment, emotional desperation and spiritual despair; while forgiving and loving (like the entire passage) carry a collection of spiritual, moral, and sexual connotations which trace the potential movement between different worlds characterized by contrasting ontological elements.

Through the narrator's framing introduction to "an Adventure that has something in it rare, I mean the extreme Affection and Compliance of a Husband" (II 497-98), Manley is careful to point out that Arethusa's story is atypical because for her the passage back from the seduction space to a socially sanctioned world of marriage (albeit "nauseous Hymen") is relatively easy. Not so for the young woman seduced by her guardian in the story of a different Charlot, "a young Girl" left to the "Care" of the Duke by her father, "for whom," Manley remarks with heavy irony, the Duke "had as great a Friendship, as a Statesman can be suppos'd to have" (I 322). This story (based on William Portland's seduction of his ward Stuarta Howard) shows the passage into a dismal world of abandonment and shame from which there is no return for this promising young woman who displays "a brightness of Genius, that would often break out in dangerous Sparkles" (I 325).

Appropriately developing from the significance of her intelligence—as opposed to beauty, for Charlot, qua Intelligence's observations, "was no great Beauty" (I 324)—the seduction of Charlot occurs initially on an intellectual level, taking place in that most powerfully seductive of interior spaces, the library. Her mind having been shaped for "Virtue" by the hypocritical Duke who intends her (or her fortune) for his

son, Charlot has initially been led away from imaginatively "dangerous" (and erotically stimulating) literature: "whatever would not edify, Airy Romances, Plays, dangerous Novels, loose and insinuating Poetry, artificial Introductions of Love, well-painted Landskips of that dangerous Poyson" (I 325).

The pointed irony in all this is that through steering Charlot away from love's "dangerous Poyson," limiting her reading to "Books of Education and Piety" and allowing her only to focus on God's love, "shewing her that nothing truly deserved to be passionately belov'd, but the Gods, because they alone were perfect," the Duke predisposes his charge to the power of a passion that is patently far more dangerous, partly because it is hidden, but largely because he is schooling her in the unquestioning acceptance of authority (325). Written into the Duke's hypocritical preaching about godly perfection and "Virtue" is the implicit duality of his thinking. At the outset of the Charlot episode, Manley characterizes him directly as, above all, a "Statesman" and thus typically unable to reconcile virtue with "a Mans making his Fortune" [sic] since, in actuality, the vices of the politician are more useful to his seductive purposes: "Ambition, desire of Gain, Dissimulation, Cunning, all these were meritoriously serviceable to him" (324).

In delineating the difference between his words and his deeds, Manley also indicates the initial configurations of two other possible worlds that emerge from the distinction the Duke makes between the discourse of Virtue and that of Vice. Manley demonstrates that the discourse of Virtue is primarily offered in the Duke's own persuasively measured words, "'Twas enough he always applauded Virtue, and in his

Discourse decry'd Vice," (324-25), and helped along by his instructions that Charlot be restricted to "Books of Education and Piety" (325). Central to a passage of sententious discourse in which the Duke's words are presented as a sermon on the perils of "violent Pleasures" or "Love" which are (in the time-honoured manner of the abuser) significantly conflated with the danger of speaking out freely, is an ominous foreshadowing of Charlot's own fate in the Duke's admonition "that whatever carried her beyond the knowledge of her Duty; carried her too far; all other Embellishments of the Mind were more dangerous than useful, and to be avoided as her Ruin" (326).

Contained in this seemingly virtuous, even paternal, exhortation to stay within the bounds of "Duty" are the outlines of Charlot's own ruin. Mapped out in the ironic twist offered by the Duke's controlling interest in particular "Embellishments of the Mind" that might prove "more dangerous than useful" is an underlying concern to turn the embellishment of her mind to his own debauched ends and reshape her life. Forming in the logos, both written and spoken, that manipulates Charlot's psyche to serve her false protector's corrupting purposes is the shape of a life ultimately twisted to destruction through the power of seductive words to create reality. These seductive techniques operate, as Baudrillard indicates, "by deception and secrecy" (1986 160) through a mind that functions in the way determined by Addison, as a dominantly controlling (or destructive) force:

> Her Solitude was Nourishment to those black and corroding Thoughts that incessantly devour'd her . . . The remainder of her Life was one continu'd Scene of Horror, Sorrow, and Repentance. (354-55)

The space that opens up the possibility of this sad "remainder of her Life" is the place of seductive words, "the Gallery, where there was a noble Library in all Languages, a Collection of the most valuable Authors, with a mixture of the most Amorous" (334). The Duke's timely decision to allow her the key to the library and the "Embellishments of Mind" found in classical texts, "the most dangerous Books of Love, Ovid, Petrarch, Tibullus, those moving Tragedies that so powerfully expose the force of Love, and corrupt the Mind," sets the seal on his successful seduction which leads to Charlot's emotional and physical ruin (339).

Again, as in the story of Arethusa and Endymion, the seducer presents the choice between different spaces which are defined in the shapes of contrasting fictional worlds. These worlds, conjured up through textual allusions to either pious or pagan narratives, are suggested through references to erotic classical literature in "well-painted Landskips" of "Love" or traditional religious writings that present the youthful imagination with clear boundaries between spiritual and corporeal actuality, advising against the pursuit of desire (or passionate emotion of any kind) in the search for godliness:

> he endeavour'd to cure her of those number of Affections and Aversions so natural to young People by shewing her that nothing truly deserved to be passionately belov'd, but the Gods, because they alone were perfect, though nothing on the other Hand ought to be hated but Vice, because we are all the Image of their Divinities. (325)

Thus, having thwarted the natural flow of emotions in his young ward, the Duke begins to alter the configurations of the landscape into which he invites her, replacing the initial exhortation that God alone be "passionately belov'd" and central to her

thoughts with a sinister imperative to love him instead, after the manner of "Myrra" in Ovid's narrative, thus making him central not only to her thoughts but to her very existence. Substituting the love of a father figure for that of a heavenly Father, the Duke uses the Ovid text as a tool in his seduction:

> He observ'd formerly, that she was a great lover of Poetry, especially when 'twas forbid her; he took down an Ovid, and opening it just at the love of Myrra for her Father, conscious red overspread his Face; he gave it her to read, she obey'd him with a visible delight; nothing is more pleasing to young Girls, than in being first consider'd as Women. (335)

Despite the parabolic function of Myrrha's tragic story, the outcome of which is announced in the original Ovidian narrative as "horrible" (Metamorphoses X 299-335), the potential warning is lost on young Charlot; for what opens up before her eyes in the Duke's self-conscious blush is an awareness of her own incipient sexual power. This classical allusion to a fictional realm where boundaries melt and power structures metamorphose, invites Charlot to view a possible world where she herself is transformed from child to woman, from powerless to powerful.

Set against the world offered by pious texts, in which male authority is emblematized in the central figure of a patriarchal God, this alternative reality emphasizing the "conscious red" of warm emotion in contrast to cold, puritanical religion, foregrounds burgeoning female sexuality and promises a hitherto unknown form of possession (or "Empire") that proves an irresistible space for the inexperienced young woman.

> Charlot saw the Duke entertain'd her with an Air of Consideration more than usual, passionate and respectful; this taught her to refuge in the native Pride and Cunning of the Sex, she assum'd an Air more haughty.

> The leaving a Girl just beginning to believe herself capable of attaining that Empire over Mankind, which they are all born and taught by Instinct to expect. She took the Book and plac'd herself by the Duke, his Eyes Feasted themselves upon her Face, thence wander'd over her snowy Bosom, and saw the young swelling Breasts just begining [sic] to distinguish themselves, and which were gently heav'd at the Impression Myrra's Sufferings made upon her Heart, by this dangerous reading, he pretended to shew her, that there were Pleasures her Sex were born for, and which she might consequently long to taste! (335)

Subverting the criminal nature of the incestuous relationship, this "dangerous reading" focuses on the banquet of the senses offered by the emotional availability of the pubescent "Girl" whose experience is enacted in a series of uncertain meanings. These doubles entendres begin with the interplay of "refuge" and "haughty," suggesting both her vulnerability and the sense of nascent power engendered in the girl by the older man's interest, significantly rendered here as "Consideration" which could mean either caring for her or assessing her value. These inscriptions of shifting actuality culminate here when Charlot, who is neither girl nor woman, is persuaded in a seemingly active construction "that there were Pleasures her Sex were born for," a provocative statement that promises appetitive action but carries a covert assumption of her passive role in this assault on her innocence. Beneath the "pretended" meaning that "her Sex were born for" tasting pleasure is the implied twist that for centuries women have been born (and bred) expressly to be tasted as objects of pleasure. Thus in this dangerously warped "reading," Charlot will be treated to the pleasurable feast whereof she is clearly meant to be the main dish.

After the manner of Ovid's fictional world which shows Myrrha's passage from freedom to entrapment symbolized in the captive space of the hardened tree trunk, the

space into which Charlot is thus enticed metamorphoses from the liberating potential of the library to the impoverished reality of physical enslavement. No sooner are the borders of her carefully controlled life opened to allow her free egress into a world of broader experience than they are closed upon her with a tragic finality once she has served her purpose in the Duke's "guilty Passion" (347).

> He was resolv'd to change her whole Form of Living to bring her to Court, to show her the World; Balls, Assemblies, Opera's, Comedies, Cards, and Visits, every thing that might enervate the Mind, and fit it for the soft play and impression of Love. One thing he a little scrupled, lest in making her susceptible of that Passion, it shou'd be for another, and not for him; he did not doubt, but upon her first appearance at Court she wou'd have many Admirers; Lovers have this opinion peculiar to themselves, they believe that others see with their Eyes: He knew that were she less agreeable, the gloss of Novelty was enough to recommend her; but the remedy he found for this, was, to caress and please her above all others; to shew such a particular regard for her, that shou'd frighten any new pretender. Few are willing to cross a first Minister, especially in such a tender Point, where all Mankind are tenacious of their Pretensions. (333-34)

Territorial rights from the political to the sexual thus inscribed in this focalization of the "Machiavel" masquerading as "a Benefactor, a Father" (332), Manley's tart delineation of the bogus "Pappa" details far more beneath the generalization on the "Pretensions" of "all Mankind" in the manipulative "Pretensions" of a politician whose "Point" cannot honestly be termed "tender" and whose method, like his discourse, is loaded with ulterior motives. Manley's ironic language with its almost concealed ulterior meanings demonstrates how the consummate politician opens his charge's horizons only in "show," for he immediately structures decided limits, like the ha-ha in landscape gardening, into the apparent vista of "the World" which he

ominously resolves to offer her by manipulative sleight of hand, magically to "change her whole Form of living" by optical illusion (333).

Expressing the process in the spatial metaphor of the path—"that her whole endeavour should be to walk in that Path he made familiar to her" (335)—Manley examines how the seduction of Charlot leads her into dramatically changing structural spaces. From the confines of his "magnificent Villa" and its gallery of books, Charlot is led first out into the fictional worlds of amorous classical texts which offer "dangerous Delights" in explaining sexual power, "the Mysteries of Nature, the congregated Pleasures of Venus" (339); then she is led into "the World" of court society where she can practise her powers of attraction "practising an Accomplishment" in order to "render her self conspicuous" to her would-be lover in a wider audience of admirers (347); thence she passes to the bedroom of the Duke's Villa where she is "undone" in an assault described by Manley in terms that give an emphatic enactment of shrinking physical and ontological space:

> She lay uncover'd, in a melancholy careless Posture, her Head resting upon one of her Hands, the other held a Handkerchief, that she employ'd to dry those Tears that sometimes fell from her Eyes; when raising herself a little, at a gentle noise she heard from the opening of a Door that answer'd to the Bed-side, she was quite astonished to see enter the amorous Duke. Her first emotions were all Joy, but in a minute she recollected herself, thinking he was not come there for nothing: She was going to rise, but he prevented her, by flying to her Arms, where, as we may call it, he nail'd her down to the Bed with Kisses; his love and resolution gave him a double vigour, he wou'd not stay a moment to capitulate with her; whilst yet her surprise made her doubtful of his designs, he took advantage of her confusion to accomplish 'em; neither her prayers, tears, nor struglings, [sic] cou'd prevent him, but in her

> Arms he made himself a full amends for all those pains he had suffer-[sic] for her.
>
> Thus was Charlot undone! thus ruin'd by him that ought to have been her Protector! (343-344)

The undoing of a young woman who is already clearly weak and vulnerable—"uncover'd," "melancholy," and "astonished"—is chillingly rendered in images of vengeful sacrifice. In the twisted economy of incestuous sexual possession, the violent conflict of which is expressed in conflicting meanings of "love and resolution" and "double vigour," the Duke takes brutal physical recompense from Charlot to "make himself a full amends" for the guilty "pains" of desiring her in the first place. Manley shows that in seizing his tribute of flesh her false "Protector" assaults and diminishes the territory of Charlot's mind, her body, and her being in every imaginable way. After offering the fictional promise of broader, brighter horizons (presented in glimpses of various fictional worlds) the Duke's seduction takes over and takes from his victim's space emotionally, socially, ontologically in the final step of a destructive process that ultimately assures his charge a lonely, anguished death, "thus ruin'd by him that ought to have been her Protector!" (344).

Manley's text ironically enacts the proposition that promises, words, discourse are essentially meaningless, or at least of dubious meaning as Charlot's world is finally closed in the knowledge that the word runs counter to the deed. Stressing the image of nailing Charlot down, Manley inserts an elliptical emphasis on the nail metaphor with the self-conscious aside "as we may call it," showing that as "he nail'd her down to the Bed with Kisses," his assault transforms the bed's hitherto comforting, expansive area into a space that bespeaks the narrow confines of a cross

or a coffin. Manley retains this spatial metaphor to describe Charlot's "Heart-broke" end after the Duke has abandoned her and married a Countess: "She dy'd a true Land-mark: to warn all believing Virgins from shipwracking their Honour upon (that dangerous Coast of Rocks) the Vows and pretended Passion of Mankind" (I 355).

This dangerous dimension of seduction emerges again in Memoirs of Europe I where Manley defines the seductive forces of wealth and pleasure seen in the political process through her description of a similar progression from one architectural space to another in a series of apartments and alcoves—one graced with a figure of Ariadne allusively recalling the mythological world of political intrigue and supernatural power (II 299). In the alcoves and recesses of private palaces—such as this one belonging to Julius Sergius, which offers a series of views in the manner of rococo architecture—lie the hidden truths about sexual roles. Figured as a paradoxical snare in the oxymoron "Maze of Bliss," this curiously enigmatic house mirrors the byzantine workings of social politics, laying out for the onlooker's gaze a pleasing range of metonymically female, enclosed spaces ("Each Appartment [sic] was accessible, all yielding to the Sight") where acts of sexual intrigue take place behind "the magnificent Glass-Doors" that, ironically, seem to bestow "a clear and noble Prospect" (II 297-98). Here (as elsewhere in her texts) Manley's language reveals the "interlocking vocabularies"[8] of politics and literature and, beneath the wittily refined language which describes these elegant settings, the "radical questionings" of values that Robert Markley indicates in the language of Restoration drama.[9]

Another function of architectural boundaries in Manley's texts is to mirror or even create narrative boundaries. Set against the "ample Building" which is Julius Sergius's private palace, is a spatial metaphor, which Manley uses to express the kind of rank overreaching explored by Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists: "he began to sprout in your Time; but, alas! his Growth is now past Knowledge! the tallest Dignities of the Empire are scarce worth his Acceptance! I'm sure the Sea and Shore are industriously and daily ravag'd to supply his Luxury" (II 278). This carnivalesque bursting of boundaries shows greed personified and, like the magnified perversity of Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel, or Pope's Dunciad, in which heroic expectations are reversed in images of bloated physicality (featuring Pope's "full-fed Heroes" or Oxford dons, "elders" who lie "dissolv'd in Port") and chaotic misrule, reveals the base underside of a lofty exterior (III.338). Manley's choice of imagery for Julius Sergius recalls more the crooked physical grotesque of Achitophel, whose body, like his seditious mind, has erupted with decay from the bounds of a pigmy frame ("And o'er informed the tenement of clay"), making him monstrous with pride and ambition (Absalom and Achitophel l.156).

Manley's vegetable image of wanton growth, showing that Julius Sergius "began to sprout," gives a satiric measure of the man's greed but the subsequent image of a land violently raped for material gain sets the tone for her depiction of sexual possession which follows. After establishing the destructive waste occasioned in the search for power, "the Sea and Shore are industriously and daily ravag'd to supply his Luxury" (278), Manley builds a seductively materialistic, decadent world

for this ambitious figure through a series of monetary images: "immense sums of Gold," "the sorry Income that he was born to," "now settled in her Patrimony," "buying of good Bargains," "lumping Pennyworths," "Money in a Purchase," "turn to Account," "a prodigious Fortune," "Privy-purse of secret Services" and "the Luxury of his Rewards" (278-80). These images effectively demonstrate the coolly economical sequence of his career moves and metaphorically indicate that his magnificent palace, which is described in detail later, has been built upon a foundation of shady deals. This, of course, achieves Manley's political purpose of effectively discrediting Halifax (the model for Julius Sergius, also husband of Cornutus's mother, portrayed by Manley as "stooping to rise" when she married him [II 499]) and the Whig Junto whose machinations fund this luxurious spying operation.

The story of Julius Sergius is introduced by an extended comparison between the "indiscreet Conduct of Ladies" such as the Ephesian Matron of Petronius (272-73) and the "inimitable" conduct of Porcia, "shining in true Merit" (276). Manley thus sets up the interplay between two worlds—the ancient world of the Satyricon (the lewder type of Menippean satire she lays claim to in her reference to Varronian style in the preface to Atalantis, thus also deliberately—and falsely—claiming the absolute fictionality of her works)[10] and the modern world of the court, where, as the Count de St. Gironne ironically points out in his narration, "the Adventures of those we know, are incomparably more diverting to us, than of such whom we never heard of" (278).

This framing allusion to ancient stories and the promise of "Diversion" (or escape) signals passages into and between different fictional worlds. From the "deep settled Thoughtfulness" of a grieving Horatio (to whom the story is being told) in a tent pitched on the Sarmatian plain, the narrative moves back and forward in time and place, from ancient Greece to Rome and Constantinople (which is really contemporary London), from a critical remark on the "Sarcasticalness" of Petronius to a little narrative match-making in the primary narrative world where Horatio is introduced to the "meritorious" Porcia's description, and then the narrator's announcement that "we'll change the Scene to the fair Messalina's of the Age" (278). What actually occurs next (with the introduction of Julius Sergius) is either a slip (for he hardly constitutes a Messalina) or a deliberate shift on Manley's part to indicate where real corruption begins in a phallocentric society.

What occurs in "that sacred Recess" is presented as a mirror image of what might naturally be expected in social intercourse; the happenings here are recognizable but distorted or reversed. Manley plays with the notions of "mutual Trust and Fidelity," "Freedom," and "Assurance," making it clear even as she invokes their presence, that the opposite obtains in the distorted world of Julius Sergius's Court. Those present in the idyllic retreat are lulled into complacent acceptance of the perverse, for in this enchanted or perhaps cursed space all usual boundaries are "stretch'd" and people persuaded to unsee or "unknow" (281): "So far are their Freedoms stretch'd, that a Husband, in beholding his own Wife in such Company, that he wou'd no where else approve of, is oblig'd to turn his Eyes, as if

to unknow, or at least must take no notice of here" (281). This disturbing idea of unknowing, together with the metaphors of stretching and turning, suggests the workings of a secret political torture chamber beneath the elegantly rendered exterior of the house, an idea which is further conjured up by Manley's picture of a moving machine beneath the soft, fleshly surfaces of the pleasure palace:

> In a word, all the rougher Passions disappear, you are allow'd to remember nothing but Pleasure and Interest, which is the true Foundation, the invisible Spring on Julius Sergius's Side, that moves the Machine even in this soft, this delectable Retreat (282)

The multiple meanings of these images show that clearly nothing is quite as it seems in this unnatural place where meanings shift and, as Manley demonstrates so fully throughout her writings, the political machine is always working beneath "this soft, this delectable" erotic surface, opposing any ideas of liberation.

Manley's architectural settings give, one might say, a socio-political perspective to her amatory narratives, in the way that the architecturally unified city (un seul) gives philosophical perspective to the notion of self (or, in Suzanne Rodin Pucci's words, "the self-constructing cogito") as formulated in Descartes' Discours de la méthode.[11] The problem is whether Manley's architectural settings conform simply to the epideictic, the incidental set piece of classical rhetoric, or whether they provide an occluded form of social perspective (if not implied criticism, then a semiotic background for that criticism). Chatman's claim that "elements of setting can perform multiple functions" (Story 142)[12] leads one to question how many functions Manley's architectural settings perform (and to what purpose). What seems to be the case (at least initially) is that the elegant architectural trappings of wealth

and power, described with comparative brevity in Manley's texts, offer backdrops untinged by emotion: they would fit Robert Liddell's "utilitarian" category.[13] Yet brief references in Manley's texts to classical styles of architecture, or paintings which feature figures from ancient stories in ekphrasis, all succeed in opening up the walls of the buildings and the narrative boundaries to offer glimpses of other fictional worlds, rendering the text particularly rich in allusion and providing an ontological depth. Particularly useful in defining the connection between setting and character is Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's phrase "trait-connoting metonymies," which, although referring to both physical surroundings and human environment, gestures towards hermeneutic or linguistic considerations of settings. In an oblique way, Rimmon-Kenan's statement about setting—that "the relation of contiguity is frequently supplemented by that of causality"—points to a line of enquiry which I follow here.[14] Thus, for example, the decadent luxury of Julius Sergius's private palace is a metonymic reminder of his personal corruption, while the magnificence of his surroundings is a result of the extraordinary wealth gained from the crown through the Whig Junto. To a large extent, what emerges from this enquiry is that the analogy established by Manley's texts between architectual setting and character is an inverse one.

What happens with Manley's frequent, albeit brief, allusions to architectural surroundings is that she creates an impression of massy power for the background against which her characters play out their entrances and exits. The beings who inhabit her fictional lands of Albigion, Atalantis, or Sarmatia occupy privileged

places in an established order, and more often than not, they do so by default rather than by merit (one of Manley's favourite words). While Manley chronicles the closet sexual antics of the rich and famous it becomes clear that the political significance of the metonymic architecture underpinning her narratives lies in the way the private palaces metaphorically undo what she apparently sets out to uphold: the central power of a patrician elite. Walls, in Manley's writings, may indeed have ears, containing as they do so many secret histories, but beyond their contained (and containing) stories these walls, pediments, "Marble Porticoes," "Corinthian Pillars," and "christal Doors" represent the civilized, neo-classical stability of a putative golden age which contrasts the moral, ethical and spiritual decay to which they bear silent witness (II 285). "O Pity!" laments the narrator of Maro (Addison) whose portrait graces the walls of Julius Sergius's palace, silently witnessing the corrupt commerce beneath the roof of a structure held up by the artifice and luxury of political power, "the Paintings and Carvings of the Roof that sustains this ample Building " (287). The lament of Manley's narrator is that despite his obvious excellence as a writer, the pursuit of which links Maro to the golden age, the "sordid" promise of Whig political gain has seduced him from the glorious paths of creativity and thus limited his world: "that Politicks and sordid Interest shou'd have carry'd him out of the Road of Helicon, snatch'd him from the Embraces of the Muses" (287). The mere connection with the spy network of Julius Sergius, whose own world is pointedly confined to the decadent limits of his palace, where he can be seen "dissolv'd in a Mid-night Debauch, and the Delicacies of his own Palace, playing every Day for immense Sums of Gold"

(278) demeans the poet Maro, snatching him back from the glory of a true golden age. In the great houses of the ruling aristocracy, those who live pavilioned in splendour are most often, according to Manley, unlike their dwelling places or their duties, neither great nor good. Betraying as it must a radical questioning of values, the inherent irony this process entails is entirely fitting to Manley's satiric purposes.

From Manley's examination of seduction in various forms, a connection between space and possession emerges. Carole Fabricant has pointed out the "profound interconnections between aesthetic, economic, and sexual forms of possession"[15] in Augustan landscape design and Manley's amatory narratives trace similar connections between aesthetic and sexual possession within the context of architectural spaces, hidden places and exposed surfaces. In addition to Addison's theories on "The Pleasures of the Imagination," other contemporary critical writings also suggest a growing awareness of the analogy between outer setting and inner response: "And do not we find that we have so join'd the Ideas of these Dispositions of Mind with those external Objects, that they always recur to us along with them?" asks Francis Hutcheson in An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (1725). In Manley's amatory fiction the most obvious link between Object and Disposition of Mind must be the bedroom; the inner sanctum (the place within) becomes a recurring emblem of female sexuality and the hierarchy of possession. Together with bedrooms, Manley uses a host of other private, pleasurable places to emphasize the transgressive, illicit desires of her characters: grottos, bathing-rooms, alcoves, galleries, closets, cooling-rooms and chambers, set in opposition to the

amply endowed, grand male buildings and spacious public rooms. Manley's brief delineations of architectural settings suggest the provocative trompe l'oeil surfaces of rococo architecture, figuring female sexuality (now you see it, now you don't) and the carefully contrived structures of gender roles which shape society, just as deliberately revealing architectural "Figures of Bodies," Addison's "bold and ample Relievo, and Swelling," or "the Concave and the Convex" both shape and conceal, suggesting the onlooker's powerful gaze encompassing swelling and hidden corporeal folds, virginal curves and pregnant billows (Spectator No. 415. 26 June 1712).

NOTES

1. Lewis discusses the word "world" which he indicates describes a self-enclosed "notional area" or "relatively closed system" with "internal unity and a character that sets it apart from other areas" (Studies in Words, 1960 260).

2. Addison's choice of this epigraph from Lucretius emphasizes the power of the mind to form visions closely resembling those seen by the eyes: "In so far as a vision perceived by the mind closely resembles one seen by the eyes." Following the epigraph's reference to "vision," Addison specifies his particular concern in this essay with the power of textual information to "raise" or construct imaginary realms—"those Pleasures of the Imagination, which proceed from Ideas raised by Words" (416, 7). This notion of the progression from "Ideas raised by Words" to the "Pleasures of the Imagination" also suggests the link between the text and its construction of a "domain of reference" as Dolezel puts it. Together with the epigraph, Addison's essay refers to the power of the imagination to take information, particularly textual information, for the purposes of constructing a "View" or "Prospect of a Place" drawn from "Nature" but with "more vigorous Touches" to achieve a heightened form of actuality which, because of the "Force" of words, may even seem more real: "that the Images which flow from the objects themselves appear weak and faint, in Comparison of those that come from the Expressions" (416, 7). Although Addison's language throughout his essays figures forth the male gaze controlling a female space, his discussion here reflects part of the debate on the imagination ("Since it is in the Power of the Imagination, when it is once Stocked with particular Ideas, to enlarge, compound and vary them at her own Pleasure," [385]) and the power of narrative to seduce its listeners or readers into alternative spaces, where "the Poet" or seducer "seems to get the better of Nature" for his or her own purposes (The Spectator, 1712 no. 416, part 7).

3. Dolezel's article is a detailed taxonomy of fictional worlds. "Towards a Typology of Fictional Worlds," Tamking Review 14 (1984-5): 261-76.

4. In Fictional Worlds, Thomas Pavel refers to the "various levels of heterogeneity" which prevent texts from "faithfully depicting worlds" (73) and indicates that although modern aesthetics assumes that fictional texts create rather than depict worlds, texts "more or less create their worlds" by taking already existent worlds and adding a few "new touches" (156).

5. See Alvin Plantinga's The Nature of Necessity, Oxford, 1974, 44; also see Lubomir Dolezel, "Kafka's Fictional World," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 11 (1984) 61-83.

6. Such a process can be seen in several seduction scenes from Elizabethan and Jacobean drama and in other seventeenth-century narratives, including Milton's depiction of Satan in Paradise Lost, appearing in all his imaginative fire, "Hovering and blazing with delusive light" (PL IX.640) to offer Eve a celestial paradise beyond her earthly paradise, the possibility to become "A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd /By Angels numberless" (PL IX 547-8). Satan, like so many other seducers, offers Eve entrance to another world which only exists in his and then—even more potently—in her imagination, leading her into catastrophic action which ultimately limits her corporeal and geographic world as the pair are expelled from edenic bliss.

7. Pointing out the dangers inherent in applying art historical style to a literary genre or mode, Park goes on to say that "Literary historians who attempt to write about period style can only be as good as the art historians who have preceded them" and he cites the "extraordinarily fine" work of Hermann Bauer (Rocaille) among others. These analyses show certain characteristics of the Rococo, forming a Rococo "aesthetic":

> "Most important of these characteristics is reversal or double reversal. Indeed, it may be said that every aspect of Rococo art depends on some kind of conscious reversal of either form or expectation, which is why the word 'surprize' figures largely in the aesthetics of the first half of the eighteenth century. Pierre Lepautre, who initiated the Rococo in 1699, created panels on which what was tectonic, namely the border, became atectonic; what was filled with designs, the enclosed panel, became blank; what designs were admitted, instead of being flat were put into relief; and what was symmetrical, namely the whole design, became asymmetrical—no less than four reversals of convention and expectation" (127).

He also discusses the Rococo interest in "softness, melting, dissolution, and an absence of center or a disorientation about where that center actually occurs" and the "emergence of a feminine principle," seen in "the miniaturization, the delicacy, the waving line, the sweet disorder, and the eroticism which pervade all the arts of the mid-eighteenth century" (129, 131). Of particular interest is what he calls "a double structure," which in French salons takes the form of "a structure of decoration which overlays and conceals the actual tectonic structure of the room" (133). See William Park's article "Rococo and the Novel" in Studies in the Novel 25 (June 1987) 125-136.

8. See Zwicker, Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Arts of Disguise, Princeton, 1984.

9. Robert Markley discusses language and ideology in the seventeenth century, citing Susan Staves (Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration) and using Steven Zwicker's phrase (from Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry 10) "interlocking vocabularies" to point out that these "interlocking vocabularies" of religion, politics and literature "often belie radical uncertainties, even radical questionings of the values that a politically centrist, religiously moderate, and wittily refined rhetoric were supposed to uphold" (33). Two-Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988.

10. Ros Ballaster points out that Manley was responding to Dryden's criticism of Varro and Menippus (through Lucian), finding a "useful precedent" in Lucian's echoes of Menippus's bawdiness. She also says that "By taking Varro as her model" Manley "furthers her (false) claim that her novels are simply fictions, invented stories, rather than taken from the lives of contemporary persons" (223). See Ballaster's article in Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss, Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760, 217.

11. See Suzanne Rodin Pucci's discussion of this "self-constructing cogito, where the self legislates and legitimates its own existence through its distance from the world" in "Letters from the Harem: Veiled Figures of Writing in Montesquieu's Lettres persanes" in Writing the Female Voice, ed. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, Boston, Northeastern U.P., 1989, 130.

    See also Jean-Joseph Goux, who presents the concept of architectural unity (as opposed to "bricolage") as a precedent (or, as Rodin Pucci puts it "grounding") for the philosophical perspective of the self-limiting cogito. "Descartes et la perspective," L'Esprit Créateur 25:1 (Spring 1985) 10-20.

12. Are Manley's architectural settings the kind of essential features which Hitchcock called MacGuffins? Chatman discusses the role and function of the MacGuffin, concluding that it is "only a device for putting the characters in jeopardy" (Story and Discourse 140). Although it seems unlikely that Manley's settings could be classified as (in Hitchcock's words) "something the characters in the film care a lot about," the argument could be made that these alcoves, recesses, doorways and passages are vital to the characters' sexual exploits, their political intrigues and hidden agendas. As such, they might be termed devices for putting the characters in jeopardy, the eighteenth-century equivalent, perhaps, of the MacGuffin. See also Focus on Hitchcock, ed. Albert J. La Valley (New York, 1972) 43.

13. Liddell categorizes five types of natural setting in A Treatise on the Novel, London, 1947, Chapter 6.

14. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction 66.

15. "Binding and Dressing Nature's Loose Tresses: The Ideology of Augustan Landscape Design" in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture vol. 8 ed. Roseann Runte (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979) 109-35.

CHAPTER 3

"Her imagin'd security from being known": Masks, Masquerades and Disguises

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> . . . the notion of "category crisis," I will contend, is not the exception but rather the ground of culture itself.
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> By "category crisis" I mean a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, Jew/Christian, noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave. The binarism male/female, one apparent ground of distinction (in contemporary eyes, at least) between "this" and "that," "him" and "me," is itself put in question or under erasure in transvestism, and a transvestite figure, or a transvestite mode, will always function as a sign of overdetermination—a mechanism of displacement from one blurred boundary to another. An analogy here might be the so-called "tagged" gene that shows up in a genetic chain, indicating the presence of some otherwise hidden condition. It is not the gene itself, but its presence, that marks the trouble spot, indicating the likelihood of a crisis somewhere, elsewhere.
>
> Marjorie Garber, Vested Interests (1992 16)

> Thus in a pageant Shew a Plot is made,
> And Peace itself is War in masquerade.
>
> Dryden, Absalom and Achitophel 740-52.

Appropriating and adapting the post-revolutionary concerns about political trickery, concealment, or counterfeit show, Manley frequently explores sexual transgressiveness through images of masks, masquerades, and disguises. As in other aspects of her writing, the Augustan interest in transformations (both imagerial and formal) is echoed in her radical use of language and genre to investigate hidden truths about socially accepted (if not acceptable) roles played by politically sanctioned

figures. To some extent this is an examination of sociopolitical dishonesty (after Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel), but Manley repeatedly inscribes within her text an additional layer of experience, questioning the shapes and borders of female sexuality and power, and revealing (as Dryden's zeugma and Garber's analogy suggest) a conflict that lies beneath or elsewhere. For women, the idea of disguising the true self had long been promulgated in popular conduct books, such as Lord Halifax's influential The Lady's New Year's-Gift of 1688, which counsels women to cover their actual feelings with practised dissimulation, seemingly yielding "dextrously" to angry husbands and donning the mask of feigned passivity in order to preserve the status quo. "You have more strength in your Looks, than we have in our Laws, and more power by your Tears than we have by our Arguments," Halifax writes, emphasizing the links between appearances and power that Manley later takes issue with in her writings (8).[1] Manley's disguised, masked and cross-dressed figures mark crises and cruxes, focussing cultural anxiety in the disruptive elements of cross-dressing, crossing over "normal" bounds.

Early in the first volume of Atalantis, a brief glimpse of a young woman disguised as a youth ironically recalls Cleopatra's disastrous political involvement in the battle of Actium. The mistress of an old Admiral with whom she goes to sea, the disguised woman is so distressed by the brutality of naval warfare, "the Roaring of the Canon, the Cries of the Wounded," that she suffers "Fits" which influence her lover sufficiently to forbid an advance and thus lose "a considerable opportunity of taking or burning most of the Enemies Ships" which deprives him of victory (I

284,285). Although Virtue points out that the "Nation's Interest" is thereby forgotten, the lingering details of this woman's gentle ministrations to "her Warriour" when she sweetens "all his Pains," and leads him "cover'd with slaughter, dust, and destruction, into the prepared Bath" gestures away from the destructive male imperative of war towards the humanity of more peacefully feminine social connections (285). Manley's message that "in the midst of danger there is no Business for her" works at one level to emphasize the disruptive effect of this marginalized (female), cross-dressed figure whose presence unmasks the "gaudy, guilded, magnificent Prospect of a Fleet," reversing expectations by showing that this navy is "bountiful in Prospect" but "detestable in Examination," with "proud," "luxurious" commanders. Similarly, at another level, this explicit contrasting of "Venus" with "the rough embraces of Bellona" tends to unravel the fabric of an acquisitive, imperialistic, male-ordered society (285).

Probably one of Manley's most famous episodes follows this discomforting anatomy of the navy's "Oaths, Drunkenness, burning Lust, Riots, Avarice, Cruelty and Disorder" (289). In itself the story of the Duchess de l'Inconstant, Count Fortunatus, and Germanicus combines a similar exposé of at least four of these topics—burning lust, avarice, cruelty and disorder—with a disordering anatomy of sexual politics. The episode is built on a distinctly convoluted example of counterfeit show, or a disguise that never was, set in the elegant boudoir of the nation's most avaricious power-broker, Count Fortunatus. Here, although a readerly suspension of disbelief about the unconvincing disguise is invited—even encouraged—through

alluring details of exposed desire which lend the narrative an erotic immediacy, the reader is nonetheless shown all along how the guise of apparent unknowing is merely a mask that slips to let out the satirical truth.

One of Manley's favourite satirical butts, who appears repeatedly throughout her texts under assorted aliases, Count Fortunatus (alias Marlborough) is a "Masterpiece" of dissembling (301). From his earliest days when he has learned the art of capitalising on love's "unlimited Bounty" (294), using the mask of a "new and innocent Lover" to secure his long-term prospects at court, he has unerringly increased his stock with the most powerful while operating under the guise of a devoted inamorato to the King's mistress. An apparent "Slave to Love" for the Duchess De L'inconstant, who is grandly billed as "Sultana Mistress to Sigismund the Second," Fortunatus (at the age of sixteen) has learned young the value of seeming other than he is. Behind the surface gloss, "the Gloss of Novelty," the youthful opportunist calculates his more profitable opportunities:

> The lovely Youth knew punctually how to improve those first and precious Moments of good-fortune, whilst yet the Gloss of Novelty remain'd, whilst Desire was unsated, and Love in the high Spring-tide of full delight; having an early Forcast [sic], a Chain of Thought, unusual at his Years, a length of View before him, not born a Slave to Love, so as to reckon the possession of the charming'st Woman of the Court, as the Zenith of his Fortune. . . . (294)

Manley's metaphors here reinforce the sense of duplicity as she interweaves the pastoral language of youthful love—"High Spring-tide"—with materialist metaphors of improving, reckoning, and forecasting. Within "those amiable Disorders and transporting Joys that attend the possession of early Love," the true values

of love are themselves disordered and transported into the grubby regions of actuarial reckoning: the verb "reckon" links the "possession" of this valuable commodity (Woman) with Fortunatus's remarkable ability to forecast the markets by means of a particulary calculating turn of mind, a "Chain of Thought," which enables him to bank on a rising fortune through sexual usury. Manley completes the weighing up of Fortunatus's real character against his assumed front with the actual figure of "six thousand Crowns" given by the Duchess to buy him a place at Court (295).

Still anxious to secure his position, Fortunatus, by now the personification of ambition, presses on, for "his Ambition would not rest there," until he has used the Duchess to find his sister a place in the Prince's bed as an insurance against future loss of power (295). Behind all this ruthless manipulation lingers the telling picture of the Count when he is introduced to the narrative by Astrea's view of him, flying high in his "Chariot and six Horses" which appear significantly dissociated from earthly reality: "They seem to cut the Air with the swiftness of their motion, scarce to touch the ground beneath, like flying Clouds, Venus's Doves, or Juno's Peacocks" (292). Recalling classical images of the gods, this shimmering mirage quality of vivid uncertainty parodies Ovid's visions of women metamorphosed and manipulated in Olympian power struggles. That this is a man with something to hide is further illustrated by the oxymoron used to describe Fortunatus's appearance: his face is curiously characterised by a "solemn Joy" that "sits upon his Face" like a mask, but "flashes out, notwithstanding his endeavours to the contrary," disguising but not quite concealing the psychological dynamic of hypocrisy (292).

Fortunatus's plot to rid himself of the Duchess once she has served his mercenary purpose, is in itself a masterpiece of deception. Manley sets up her illustration of the Duchess's sexual desperation and her ambitious lover's deceit with more images of money—here the money is showered on the Count when he successfully deceives the Duchess into believing that his latest conquest, Jeanitin, whom he will marry, is merely a passing fancy. The duchess's overpowering desire which is described as liquid passion, overflowing and wetting "his Cheeks with drops of Love," in a tearful entreaty to remain with her, provides a context of sympathetic, if desperate, natural emotion within which the means of fulfilment are starkly materialistic (302). In Fortunatus's conciliatory reply, Manley amasses mercantile metaphors ("Benefits," "possess," "exchange," "gaining") to point the meaning of this sexual bargain. Eagerly following the verbal direction of the "charming Count," and, as it were, hungrily grasping the going rate of exchange, the Duchess responds to a broad monetary hint (literally) in kind:

> I believe you, my Dear, answer'd the Dutchess, overcome with transport, you shall live only for me, and in return, take, take all that an over-indulgent Monarch has enrich'd me with! these Jewels! these Bills must be yours! I know nothing so valuable as your self, all my Treasure is at your Devotion, be you but mine. (303)

Here the confusion of love with the exchange of goods for services displaces the boundaries between public and private enterprise, fiscal and emotional responsibility, and feeds into the socio-sexual crux evoked in the scene that follows.

Planning to spend an afternoon at Fortunatus's house "in a waste of Joy," the duchess spells out her sensual expectations for the assignation and in so doing offers a carpe diem motif for the upwardly mobile:

> The King Hunts to Morrow, and will not be in Town till Night, let us pass the Afternoon at your House, in a waste of Joy, let us live whilst Life is pleasing, whilst there's a poinancy in the Taste, desire at heighth, the Blood in perfection, and all our Senses fitted for those Raptures you know so well how to receive and give. (303-4)

Her highly charged emotional illustration of erotic give and take is countered in the text by the count's inner reckonings which equate profit and loss with his quick-thinking manipulation of the duchess into an encounter that has a sexual twist. Never one to relinquish the advantages of low cunning, Fortunatus (as Manley tells us with relish) "wou'd have very gladly compounded any thing (unless it were Treasure) that the Dutchess wou'd abate of her fondness" and rapidly calculates, "by a relief of Thought, he quickly guessed," that his only way out—which is euphemistically rendered as "his only way to come off with honour"—is to reverse all accepted notions of either honourable conduct or customary sexual roles and make her do the work (304). In order to catch the duchess in the act of sexual betrayal he will trick her into a liaison with "a new Lover," and (here's the twist) "make her the Aggressor" (304). Accordingly, Fortunatus engages the services of the beautiful Germanicus, a "young Gentleman" whose "manly Beauties" are deployed to gratify his own and the duchess's desires under the guise and in the bathing-room of Fortunatus himself.

When the duchess enters the bathing-room in the heat of the day, "the Weather violently hot" evoking her own sexual heat, a servant has already begun the process of entrapment by informing her that "his Lord was lain down upon a Day-bed that join'd the Bathing-Room, and he believed, was fallen a Sleep since he came out of the Bath" (305). That this alluring male figure is neither "his Lord" nor "a Sleep" soon becomes evident, as both the reader and the duchess are drawn into a liminal space of confusing signs and reversals, a Shakespearean "green world" of carnivalized possibilities.[2]

> . . . the Dutchess softly enter'd that little Chamber of Repose, the Weather violently hot the Umbrelloes were let down behind the Windows, the Sashes open, and the Jessimine that cover'd 'em blew in with a gently Fragrancy; Tuberoses set in pretty Gilt and China Posts, were placed advantageously upon Stands, the Curtain of the Bed drawn back to the Canopy, made of yellow Velvet embroider'd with white Bugles, the Panels of the Chamber Looking-Glass, upon the Bed were strow'd with a lavish Profuseness, plenty of Orange and Lemon Flowers, and to complete the Scene, the young Germanicus in a dress and posture not very decent to describe. . . . (305)

The alternate concealing and revealing suggested by images of open windows with let down blinds, drawn back bed curtains and a covered canopy embroidered with white bugles builds up the erotic pace of the passage and emphasizes the duchess's misguided expectations. The boundaries between her arousal and his, her role and his, her sexuality and his, are effectively blurred by crossed signs and mixed messages. The "white Bugles" embroidered upon the canopy describe a space which is both male and female, both phallic and invaginated, just as the prone figure on the bed, although reportedly (and anatomically) male is presented in a feminized posture, masquerading as another person and posing (passively) as sexually other.

The disruptive implications of Fortunatus's plan to overturn established power structures (and, simultaneously, to reverse customary sexual roles of active male and passive female) are reinforced by Manley's choice of inside-out images: the umbrelloes inside are billowing out, the jessamine outside is blowing in, the fully blown blossom of tuberoses spills out from rigidly containing gilt and china posts placed "advantageously upon Stands" which are solid structures that nonetheless suggest an upward directional thrust (305). Throughout this episode tactile surfaces of petal, china, mirror, velvet, and skin work together and against each other to create a scene of powerful sensual antagonisms which furthers the impression of displacement from outside (political) crisis to inside (gender) crux. Every aspect of the scene manifests the unexpected but (paradoxically) predictable: a natural luxuriance of flowers, fabrics, hair and limbs masks (as opposed to being masked by) the artful display of rigid phallic vessels and sexual tumescence. The tricky machinery of the counterfeit show is housed in natural splendour, disguised as an alfresco occurrence rather than an engineered effect.

Germanicus lies seductively exposed but partly concealed, inviting the onlooker's gaze, like an erotically displayed eastern odalisque, his gown of exotic "Carnation Taffety, stain'd with Indian Figures," loosely pulled apart to reveal his naked torso and legs. His hair is noticeably feminized, "his beautiful long, flowing Hair," presenting a provocative sexual uncertainty. Significantly, only his face and arms are covered, both of which will finally undo the pretence, his face revealing his identity and his arms (provocatively doubling as arma virumque) his sexual

presence—as opposed to the physical (or supposedly sexual) absence intimated by feigned sleep and feigned passivity. Manley effectively organizes the sequence of images in this passage to demonstrate the emotional and physiological impact on the hungry duchess of this physically uncertain (because disguised) but inviting figure. Initially noting the deeply coloured gown (an ambiguously sexed article of dress), and ribbon, then the shirt and night-gown, somewhat coyly describing the periphery of a body pretending to sleep, the narrator then shifts the gaze (as would the duchess) to the unfeigned (unfeignable) actuality of a sexually aroused male:

> . . . it was he that was newly risen from the Bath, and in a lose Gown of Carnation Taffety, stain'd with Indian Figures, his beautiful long flowing Hair, for then 'twas the Custom to wear their own tied back with a Ribbon of the same Colour, he had thrown himself upon the Bed, pretending to Sleep, with nothing on but his Shirt and Night-Gown, which he had so indecently dispos'd, that slumbring as he appear'd, his whole Person stood confess'd to the Amorous Dutchess, his Limbs were exactly form'd, his Skin shiningly white, and the Pleasure the Ladies graceful entrance gave him, diffus'd Joy and Desire throughout all his Form; his lovely Eyes seem'd to be closed, his Face turn'd on one side (to favour the Deceit) was obscur'd by the Lace depending from the Pillows on which he rested. . . . (305-6)

Reiterating the layered perceptions that evoke masking and unmasking, this passage shows the gaze moving back and forth from suggestive outer edges to meaningful inner core. The emphatic ruddy coloration of the gown contrasts with skin "shiningly white," but underlying the contrast is a vivid reminder that beneath the white skin the insistent flush of arousal has "diffus'd Joy and Desire throughout all his Form." Although his face is masked by the lace, favouring the social component of the disguise (the Deceit), the disruptive meaning of the scene emanates from the intriguingly active/passive configuration in "his whole Person stood confess'd." This

confessional aspect of truth-telling linked with images of physical exposure creates a catachretic implication of crisis; metaphorically it embodies an emotional unmasking which crosses through the hierarchical boundaries of gender or status. Such images of "sexual topsy-turvy—from the transvestite male escaping responsibility and harm to the transvestite fool and the unruly woman unmasking the truth" were powerful, according to Natalie Zemon Davis (in "Women on Top") "so long as sexual symbolism had a close connection with questions of order and subordination" (Davis, 1985 136).[3] Janet Todd says that what distinguishes this famous episode, reflecting similar situations in Aphra Behn's work, is that the woman's role changes from object to subject but even more unusual in this particular amorous description is "that the gaze is female and the langourous artful seductiveness of the body is a man's" (Todd, 1989 89).

Manley's description of the sexual encounter is initially filled with language that puts into question all apparent actuality and enacts the unreliable nebulousness of a masquerade: "seem'd," "turn'd," "the Deceit," "obscur'd," "expected," "blinded," "not perceive," "her Eyes," "reveal'd," "pretended," "the Deceit" (306). The bed, upon which the duchess "gently threw herself," is the site of a paradoxical uncertainty, indicated by the oxymoron Manley uses to embody the tension between seemingly masculine aggression and seemingly feminine compliance. According to Garber the bed is also the "discovery space," and "the place of sexual unmasking" but here the unmasking paradoxically reveals an undisguised male body and undisguised libidinous appetite, the borders of which are blurred as the disguise is lifted and the

two become one. An unexpected implication of this sexual union is that it is only in the co-equal enactment of mutual passion, the expression of which demands power sharing in an unashamedly physical way, that these unmasked lovers are incriminated and the woman then politically unempowered. Although a degree of psycho-social equality is suggested by this ungendered conjugation (the elision of status and gender offering a compelling erasure of difference), when the duchess and Germanicus give up all pretence or restraint, "lavishly sacrific'd to Love," any equilibrium in their lavishly shared desires is upset by the impending sacrifice of the duchess's political influence to Fortunatus's power lust. The bed upon which the duchess is ultimately discovered in flagrante delicto and which is the place of her undoing, is ironically the setting for her betrayer's political betterment and serves as the morally base foundation of his empire, just as the duchess has been a "Foundation of all his Fortune" (311-12).

In order to cover her reckless crossing over the boundaries of sexual propriety and social status, the duchess, who has been "transported" elsewhere in union with her young lover, must somehow find a way back. Boding ill, though, for the duchess is an ironic drowning image which shows Germanicus clinging on to his "Glorious Destiny"—which also happens to be the duchess's body—"with the strenuous Embrace, which held her, as a drowning Wretch is said to grasp the last thing he has hold of" (307). Although the force of this metaphor is evident, its full meaning remains unclear until Manley later clarifies precisely how Germanicus grasps the material rewards of a "Glorious Destiny" when he has "made an ample Fortune by

the Dutchesses Favour" (314). What signifies here is not, as at first appears, the strenuousness of Germanicus's embrace, but the determination with which he pulls the duchess down in order to rise above her. Navigating this treacherous passage from the place of abandonment where she has first unknowingly, then knowingly, "bestow'd" herself upon Germanicus, the duchess recovers herself to a degree, resumes her own disguise of unknowing, and feigns confusion, while Germanicus (lying through his teeth) begins to tell the tale that entraps her:

> When they had lavishly sacrific'd to Love, the Dutchess, with a feigned Confusion, ask'd what was become of the Count, and whether he were such a Villain to depute another in his Place? So far from it Madam, answered Germanicus, that I must expect to defend my Life, should he know of my good Fortune, for he would certainly put me to it. But where is he then ask'd the inquisitive fair One? Did you not receive a Letter from him? Heavens! I receive a Letter from him, for what? when he expected my self, what is the Mystery of all this? Ah! return'd the dissembling Lover, the Count is possess'd, he knows not what he does, his Affairs call'd him another way. . . . (307)

Within this comedic exchange, where the dramatis personae include "a Villain," "a fair One," and a "dissembling Lover," the text explores a surface layer of farcical confusion, which opens up to expose issues of authority. Behind Germanicus's feigned fear for his "Life," the duchess's feigned "Confusion," and the general uncertainty about "the Mystery of all this," stands the manipulative figure of Fortunatus and the controlling clarity of his plot to discredit the duchess. In his "dissembling" story, Germanicus pretends that the count is out of control, either "possess'd" or a "Hair-brain'd Creature" who has misplaced the crucial letter (later found), while the discourse ironically exemplifies the absolute self-possession of one

whose affairs have manifestly "call'd him another way" and who knows precisely where he is going.

Throughout this episode, Manley's chosen narrative method formally enacts the multiple layers or levels of the masquerade. As Germanicus tells a tale within a tale within a tale, his embedded narrative in itself creates levels of subordination in the main narrative, or, in Rimmon-Kenan's words, "such narratives within narratives create levels of stratification" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983 91). Beneath the "extradiegetic level" (Genette) of the goddess's framing narrative is the "diegetic" level of the story about the duchess and her two lovers; beneath this level again is the hypodiegetic story of the count's movements and intentions (told by Germanicus), confirmed in the letter written by the count which is introduced as false evidence by Germanicus, and essentially provides another layer. The explicative function of this analepsis appears to clarify uncertainties and fill in lacunae (Chatman) while leaving crucial questions open and actively recreating the mixed messages of disguise or masquerade.

What is offered in the text as a "completive anachrony" (Chatman),[4] masquerading as the completive details of the whole story set out by Germanicus in a series of neatly chronological steps, turns out to be significantly incomplete with a few vital steps missing from the deceptive chronology. This perplexing temporal displacement works like an alibi to shift the meaning of present events and change appearances. Focusing the duchess's attention on a letter purporting to explain Fortunatus's absence (or where he physically <u>is</u>), the artful plan distracts her from (effectively masking) his impending presence by substituting the words on the page

(and in the deceptive story) for the deeds in the flesh. The power of this male engendered language to mask the truth, to superimpose false signs and subjugate the female subject, gestures towards the kind of ongoing battle observed by Hélène Cixous: "Language conceals an invincible adversary because it's the language of men and their grammar" (Cixous, 1976 887).[5] The duchess's response to the letter—"if you please, unriddle this Affair"—begs for unmasking, while paradoxically offering Germanicus the opportunity to compound the riddle and also stressing the pervasive threat of confused meanings in unreliable words that create riddles. The words of her plea to Germanicus are weighted with dramatic irony: "Cannot my Kindness triumph over your Fidelity to the Count? Let it get the better of your Confusion?" (308). Words such as "Fidelity" suggest loyalty but in the context of the duchess's abruptly marginalized position her translation of "Fidelity" (into betrayal of the "Traitor" Fortunatus) invites subversion of the now entirely male power structure. From the moment the duchess breaks the seal and obligingly attempts to "read these Words," any remaining confusion about meaning, "the Mystery of all this," (307) is further compounded by the double meanings of the words themselves, both in the letter and in Germanicus's disarmingly simple attempt to clear up the matter. Germanicus's interpretation of the letter masquerades as an innocent ordering of prior events, presented in a straightforward explanatory sequence which, although effectively distancing him from Fortunatus's actions (as merely an observer or reporter), simultaneously charts his culpability in the deceit (as the Count's "Bedfellow") and his agency in the redistribution of power that sacrifices one older female bedfellow of the

count for one younger (Jeanitin, the deceptively named "worthless Girl" Fortunatus promptly marries).

From the bedside stand holding the letter the story moves back in time to the previous night and the bed where Germanicus has supposedly slept at the count's side. Germanicus's statement to this effect, "The Count sometimes makes me his Bedfellow, Madam, last Night I was so," sounds a particularly ironic note in view of the double entendre that suggests "Bedfellow" could "mask" either confederate or whore, its claim to neutrally descriptive status leaving the question confusingly open and also implying the perilously unstable status of Fortunatus's bedfellows (308). Thence the narrative moves forward to the afternoon when the count is pictured going "down the Backstairs" and crossing the gardens to Jeanatin's lodgings, "by which means" (it all fits logically to seem quite plausible) he is supposed to have been unnoticed by the Gentleman in waiting (309). As this underlying or hypodiegetic narrative continues, creating a form of distance in the text between the confused diegetic present and the neatly contained past, Manley presents the objectified steps of the plot, her spatial images passing both forward to Fortunatus's new place (with Jeanatin in a politically powerful future) and backward to the place of sexual transgression which is also the place of discovery and undoing.

After the duchess's own "feigned confusion" (which suddenly becomes very real) the narrative pretence of clarification through Germanicus's fake unriddling—a seemingly completive anachrony—transforms the uncertain world of the "little chamber of repose" into a clearly sequential series of concrete images that ironize the

maze-like uncertainty which prevails. By now the duchess is so thoroughly caught up in the entrapping narrative that she loses herself and her sense of time, having "lov'd away three or four hours" in "excess of love" until "that dangerous moment" of sexual climax which is simultaneously the climax of the story. Like a tableau vivante, the discovery scene shows the characters caught, temporarily frozen in their climactic masquerade which Manley renders succinctly, demonstrating a relish for the farcical:

> In that dangerous moment the Count (as they had agreed) with softly treading steps enters the Chamber, and finds the happy Pair at the ultimate of all their Joys. The Scene was admirable; Germanicus counterfeited Confusion, the Count a transport of Anger; the Dutchess, without counterfeiting, was really so, and by an admirable Boldness and Haughtiness of Nature, ask'd him how he durst presume to enter a Place where his Gentleman must tell him she was, without giving notice at the Door? (309-10)

Although the "dangerous moment" unravels the narrative knot and points the direction of the remaining diegesis, it is also a confirmation of the crisis obtaining throughout the episode: the iterative images of "counterfeiting" and "confusion" undermine any diegetic éclaircissement that seems to be taking place. Briefly, the social masks slip to show psychological verity, but they are just as quickly resumed, leaving the duchess, having mistakenly enacted her real anger instead of feigning some other emotion, finally exposed to a censure (or punishment for her transgressive act) that the two male figures escape. Operating as the hermeneutic gap of a detective story where the details are filled in after the event, the epistemological enigma of the earlier love scene in the transforming green space is here reversed to reveal an ordered list of effects which demonstrates the characteristic extent of Fortunatus's systematic

cunning and draws both the duchess and the reader into his masquerade. Although attempting to pull rank on the count with a sudden recovery of her haughty stature, the duchess is plainly brought down in this "dangerous moment" of unbridled sexuality, branded by the count "the most immoderate of her sex" and reduced so significantly in her royal protecter's estimation that although he sometimes sees her "in turn," it is "never after with Esteem" (311).

The clandestine lover's reversal of fortune recalls the ironic foreshadowing of an earlier remark that Fortunatus is "not born a Slave to Love" (294). The duchess, however, ultimately is enslaved by the love experience which causes her "a great Belly" and although her royal protector, the "good-natur'd" Prince, allows the pregnancy to pass "in the esteem of the World (as the rest of hers had done) for his," the bugle-bed episode alters the course of her life (311). Her subsequent loss of status after the mutually satisfying sacrifice to love with Germanicus (which translates into a political sacrifice in the aftermath of their transgressively cross-gendered sexual encounter) marks a "category crisis," one of Garber's "permeable" borders that allows crossings from categories such as male to female and master to slave (Garber, 1992 27). In crossing over the boundaries between clearly differentiated sexual roles in that mysteriously transformed and transforming place, the "green world" of the flowery, bowery bathing room, the figures of the duchess and her youthful conquest enter the space of the "third" term, which, as Garber explains is "a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility" that questions the idea of

"one": "Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge" (11).[6]

Another "space of possibility" which can similarly be seen to question such unitary concerns as identity, self-sufficiency and self-knowledge is the space described in the garden maze episode towards the middle of Atalantis's second volume. Again, Manley uses the narrative frame to introduce and emphasize the issues dealt with in the intercalated story. Referring back to the story of Elonora and Count Biron and commenting at length on the morally and socially disruptive effects of gambling, the goddesses' learned disquisitions focus on images of ruin, reversal and exchange. Astrea determines that her Prince shall abolish gaming:

> this fashionable Ruin, this inexcusable Destruction! A Wheel of Fortune, which with her prepostrous Whirl, raises the Wretch, born from Mud; adorns those choppy Hands with shining Diamonds, whose proper use Nature design'd to tug the Cable and the Oar, to hold the Plough and dig their Bread, from out the harden'd Furrows. Whilst those born Great, with the same Whirl, she forces to descend; losing all that their shining Ancestors, by glorious War, or the more glorious liberal Arts, obtain'd; whence not only their Fortunes but their Vices are exchang'd. The gaming Sharper generously enriching the Bubble he has undone, with the Secrets of those vile cheating Arts, by which he wrought his Ruin: From whence, he that was the valu'd Gentleman, commences odious Sharper, and the odious Sharper the fine Gentleman. . . . (I 644-45)

Virtue's response, pointing out in turn that "not the Men alone, my Dear Astrea, but the Women, my peculiar Province, are infected," by "exchanging all their Charms for Gold" and leaving "inestimable Virtue barter'd for that malignant Metal," takes up this imagery of ruin and reversal, answering it with images of exchange, barter and disease, and suggesting that the entire body politic is in a state of grave crisis (645).

The disruptive symptoms of this critical condition that creates systemic inversions, making women "bold, avaritious, designing, unmerciful, neglectful Mothers, insupportable Wives," has been caused, Manley's language indicates, by the upheaval of substituting greedy mercantilist standards for magnanimous noble principles (645).

Having thus established signal political anxieties underlying the subsequent narrative, Manley introduces Count Biron's history through Intelligence's invitation to the other "Divinities" to "repose beneath the Canopy of these spreading Trees" and then to enter his palace invisibly for "to your Divinities all Places are pervious" (645). While these deities observe and comment on the shifting or permeable boundaries that indicate the uncertain state of the nation, it is significant that their information can be gained partly through a supernatural ability to pass freely over or through boundaries (such as walls) which are normally recognized as impervious in the sub-lunary world. This world is, nonetheless, as Intelligence reminds her divine companions, in itself filled with the kinds of disjunctions or contradictions that mark a character such as Count Biron who is "the greatest Genius of his Age, with the least of it in his Aspect" (645-46). Repeatedly, Manley's method is to reveal socio-political dissonances through the anatomy of such a character's "Aspect," her means of indirect characterization providing analogues (in setting, appearance and action) for the inner machinations of a figure like Biron and, in so doing, the affairs of the nation he controls: "The Affairs of a Nation in his Head, with a pair of Cards, or a Box of Dice in his Hand" is a picture that in itself tells a story (646).

The kind of character Manley ascribes to Count Biron is one akin to the leagues of complicated monsters mentioned by Milton and Dryden to indicate deep schism amongst powerful, controlling forces (whether supernatural or political). Biron's ability to change shape and take on the guise of whatever is politically expedient is compared to scene-changing on stage and his mind is likened to a labyrinth of "foldings" and "intricasies," the peculiarly spatial quality of Manley's metaphor indicating that any who might be conducted "in" to examine this cerebral maze would run the risk of being lost therein: "Yet to conduct you in, to shew the foldings, the intricacies of his Mind, would require Ariadne's Clew, to save you from being lost in the Labyrinth" (646). In addition to this central psychological labyrinth image, Manley sets the tone for the story about Biron and the Marchioness of Caria with a series of balanced rhetorical oppositions that suggest masks or disguises and show his hypocrisy and cunning:

> A vast Strain of Court-Skill is to be observ'd in all his Conversation. An artful Composition of what are both condemn'd and applauded. He courts Humility but is wedded to Ambition: He moves, he talks a Hero! but he lives a Man! No Pleasures that he has not prov'd, no gentile Excess, that he has not tasted; yet appearingly Abstemious and Regular. Tho' great of Genius, great in most Things, yet not to be defended in all. (646)

This heavily loaded discourse points up the artfully staged masquerade which shows much of court life to be suspect and these prominent court figures unreliable. Manley's rhetorical flair here (as elsewhere) also demonstrates an awareness that doubleness or "Ambiguitie" (according to Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie) can

wield seditious power, to the extent that "many insurrections and rebellions have bene stirred up in this Realme" (267).[7]

Manley rarely lets her readers forget that these dangerously divided, ambiguous, complicated, covert, dissonant characters masquerading as reliably other, are the very custodians of the "Common-Wealth" towards whom the people look for guidance and example. The twisted standards of a politician like Biron muddle all political endeavours into those of sexual opportunism and financial gambling, the "Useful" and "the Art of Gaming" meaning far more to the count than "Arts" and "Sciences" (647). Again, it is the image of disguise that indicates crisis in a nation where a statesman like Biron will brazenly offer preferment to the unworthy who can buy his favour, "His Favour, with too vast a burst of Light, glaring full in the Face of the Unworthy" (646-47). Through a process of corrupt exchange, Biron gains access to "a beautiful Lady" companion of the Mock-Chevaliere. In this antithetical system that reverses ethical or moral standards of worth, both the "beautiful Lady" and "the Art of Gaming" are ironically offered as interchangeable "Accomplishments" (647). The lady thus implicitly devalued as a medium of common barter, although "enough to recommend any Man with as little worth as the Chevaliere, even to Count Biron's Favour," is evidently worth even less than her undeserving companion, for at least the Chevaliere is granted a post on the basis of Biron's "fondness" for the woman's "Charms and Interest," while Biron goes collecting his carnal interest on the deal "to the Chevaliere's house to Visit, under the Disguise of an old Woman"—his

assumed mask of years unsuccessfully covering what is effectively an age-old abuse of women through prostitution (647).

Manley's rhetoric here exposes the perverted principles beneath the disguise. By arguing ironically in a series of innocent rhetorical questions for the "Useful" profitable practices of "a Politician, a Statesman," and against the "Useless" arts and sciences, she pits the hidden rogue leaders against steady hearts of oak, the great and good:

> For what are Arts and Sciences to a Politician, a Statesman? What are Historians, Poets and Poems, but exuberant Branches, superfluous to the growth of a Common-Wealth, who raise and defend Notions of right and wrong; teach Principles and self-mischevous stedfastness, without regard to Times and Seasons or any of those Considerations, that so wise a Man as Count Biron takes along with him, in all his Actions? (647)

While the exuberant branch metaphor extends fittingly into the idea of mercurial flux occasioned by changing political seasons, the real meaning written into the development of arts and sciences is that of growth combined with honest strength, such a potent combination as that implied in a ubiquitous symbol of national fortitude and reliability—the oak tree. What the politicians condemn as rank superfluity in others is, by implication, shown to be their own power lust, echoing Dryden's line "Desire of pow'r, on earth a vicious weed" (Absalom and Achitophel 305). Clearly writing against the shifting loyalties of those who change allegiance along with the seasons, Manley argues implicitly for a steadfastness that exposes the "self-mischevous" superfluity of its seditious opponents.

With leaders of Biron's dubious calibre it comes as no surprise to learn that the "Utopians" who inhabit this island are riven with conflict; although "a People happy

in their Climate," they are nonethless "miserable in themselves" (648). Manley's lengthy analysis of the nation is highly topical and shows traces of other texts--both before and after Atalantis. Like Milton's "complicated monsters" in Pandaemonium (Paradise Lost X 523), or Dryden's "Solymaean rout," a "whole Hydra more" of "sprouting heads," this particularly changeable mass of people is deeply divided and restlessly unreliable: "so restless that they seem to possess nothing," they are "a People so divided, not only among themselves, but each Man in himself" (648). In the midst of a passage filled with images of violent change and meaningless conflict ("Faction," "Discontent," "Tumults," "Revolution," "Cruelty," "Bloodshed"), Manley inserts an image of domestic oeconomia that points up the wasteful absurdity of an unnecessarily complicated political situation: "They change Parties, they change Monarchs, with the same Ease that they shift their Linnen, with as much fondness for the New, as Contempt for the Old" (648). This familiar linen-changing image of household economy offers an implicitly ironic balance to the "Oeconomy of the War" that the people "stand not to weigh" even though it must affect the balance of their everyday lives (649).

Manley's discussion of the country's religious opinions suggests the metaphorical basis for Swift's discussion of the Lilliputian Big-Endians and Little-Endians: "As to Religion, they have almost as many Opinions as there are Families; yet is there a pretended National One, or rather Two, because we find it divided in Fact and Terms, of GREAT and LITTLE" (649). Yet, so saying, all this faction and discord is impressively knit together in the split consciousness and disturbing

versatility of a crowd-pleasing performer, who can "humour the Genius of such a People," while pursuing "the Interest of the Nation," the figure who manages to combine within his character the "two Opposites": Count Biron (650).

As the story unfolds, exploring this dissonant political scene in which Biron's character is central (epitomising the divisions of the national character), Manley moves the focus to the royal family itself where the "Arbitrary" methods of the Marquis of Caria and other "great Officers" show Biron in good company (651). One of the main issues at court is the plan to legislate a masculine line of succession in place of the feminine succession which has hitherto obtained, a plan which "would break the Laws and Customs" (651). The threat to the nation, which begins "to be in a ferment," is extended by Biron's distinguished orchestration: "Methods which subverted their known Laws; destroy'd their Constitution; and were in a way (should they succeed) not only of breaking the Succession, but of making the Monarchy unlimited and Arbitrary" (652). Into this atmosphere of subversion, "Intelligence, Interest, Cunning," the Marchioness of Caria has, significantly serpentine, "insinuated her self" closer to the throne and "into the Lady Olimpia's Favour" (having cleverly foreseen that Olimpia will "one Day" inherit the crown). Through methods "Artificial and Cunning," the Marchioness's forceful character (clearly a match for Biron's devious ambition) takes control over the royal Lady's life: "She gain'd such an Ascendant over her" that the Marchioness becomes a force to be reckoned with, someone "consider'd" by all those who recognize the power behind the throne or want some part of it (652).

Heading the list of those who have "consider'd" (a verb which in itself suggests a mental weighing up) the Marchioness, is (somewhat predictably in view of their shared interests) Count Biron. Manley's choice of fire metaphors in this passage shows the Marchioness's impact on the Count to be that of an assault by a fiery energy which he has learned to smother or "suppress"; but "the Fire" that is conventionally read as love is here shifted in meaning by Manley's placement of images (652). Unable to "defend himself" from the effects of the Marchioness's "Charms" which leave his heart "inflamed" like that of the conventional lover, Biron burns with a love that is not exactly unrequited, but carefully controlled in view of the prevailing economy: "he was forced to suppress the Fire because that he saw but little hopes of a return" (652). Although on the surface this delineation of passion seems familiar enough, the juxtaposition of "Charms" with "defend" earlier in the same sentence and "Ascendant" in the previous sentence (describing the Marchioness's control over the crown) provides the reader with a strong impression that this ostensibly loving "Fire" masks an underlying urge for total mastery connected with a lust for power, or ambition well invested to yield a "return" (652). Manley's extended psychological study of Biron's determined mastery over the conventional love experience gives significant insight into his forceful assault on the Marchioness's "feeble" person in the later garden maze scene (663).

Clearly though, the Marchioness is politically a match for such a player as Biron. Her exterior "Charms," which unite to show "Nothing could be fairer or more agreeable than Madam de Caria," mask a paradoxical nature that Manley describes in

the same language as the Count's "two Opposites" (650): "In her were reconcil'd the two Opposites, and which has never been esteemed a Paradox, Gallantry and Covetousness: Unless you will still call it Covetousness to desire Lovers as well as Money" (653). This divided self, so effectively "reconcil'd" to present a false front to the world, is matched only by the disguised self of a husband who is "as ambitious of Glory as a true Hero, as Covetous as his Wife, as Self-interested as self-love could make him" (653). The ironic gloss of a manifestly dishonest opportunist as "true Hero" broadly motions to the hypocritical masking of true selves and disguising of real motives that enable those characters who share the same greedy "Taste" as Biron and the Carias to be covered in glory, their hidden vices only appearing when the mask slips from time to time: "yet shining in a thousand Virtues that obscur'd his Vices, with the addition of Good-Fortune and Court-Favour they but by intervals appear'd" (653).

Once these three characters are linked psychologically, it only remains to show how their particular triangle is configured. A triangle, at least, is what we have come to expect from the way Manley has structured this narrative, but her strategy is to demonstrate how peculiarly involved and labyrinthine these leading political characters and their psycho-sexual politics become. To this end she introduces a fourth player, the Duke of Candia, who has possession of the Marchioness's heart and acts as a loving locum tenens in her "Soul" while the Marchioness's husband campaigns abroad. Although the Duke of Candia is presented as Count Biron's "powerful Rival" for the Marchioness's love, Manley has already emphatically demonstrated that

Biron's apparently enthralled obeisance at the feet of Madame de Caria and the God of Love is merely a mask of loving humility. For while Biron is heard freely discoursing on how this passion seems to the world—"however all Politician as the World esteem'd him, and as he would be thought, Love still found he was but a Man like others, and as easily disarm'd" (654)—he is clearly not "a Man like others" when he can retain an extraordinary ability to detach himself from any real feeling enough to calculate the political gains to be twisted out of any liaison with the object of "this Passion" (655).

In the midst of conventional romance language showing Biron as Mme. de Caria's vassal, her "fair Eyes" making him "lay down at her Feet all Pretentions, that interfered with her Arbitrary Right of Beauty" Manley inserts a saccharine little verse (ironically quoting Rochester's "Letter from Artemesia to Chloe") about the "inestimable Joys" of love, beginning "Love the most generous Passion of the Mind!/The soft Retreat that Innocence can find!" and ending with the famous couplet about the "cordial Drop" that makes the "nauseous Draught of Life go down" (655). Rochester's cleverly ventriloquized speech of the lady in this satirical defining and questioning of romantic love is in itself an enactment of masking the self. The elevated language is also immediately undercut in the text by a seeming non sequitur couched in the more clinical terms of Manley's discussion about the "Peculiar" qualities of "great Genius's" [sic] (655). Manley's abrupt change of direction here reveals the underlying reality of the Count's calculating world: no matter how inflamed with passion or "Love" he may wish to seem, "the most generous Passion of

the Mind" escapes him and, like the love poem by the notorious libertine, is never more than a piece of role-playing. For Manley, the hypocrisy of a lover who can find "the delicasy and admirable Secret of uniting his Love and Interest" (656) is rendered, tongue-in-cheek, as the mental effort of a "great Genius," a term we are invited to step back from in satirical disbelief:

> But as great Genius's have this Peculiar, that when they are in Misfortunes, and meet unluckly [sic] Accidents, they have address, not only to extricate themselves, but to make those very Misfortunes conducive to the advantage that those Accidents seem to obstruct: So Count Biron foresaw that this Passion which he so ragingly felt for Madam de Caria, by her ascendant in the Lady Olympia's Favour, might be brought to introduce and fix him there; an Advantage he had but then little prospect of. (655)

Manley reminds us that for people like Count Biron the approach to social or political situations is always cerebral, recalling the opening image of a labyrinthine psyche which is then transposed into the spatial image of the rural labyrinth where Biron takes advantage of Madam de Caria and realizes the "Advantage he had but then little prospect of." This Machiavellian political ability to capitalize on "Accidents" and make "Misfortunes conducive to the advantage" that seems obstructed is examined in the "fatal Labyrinth" episode with critical implications about social and political violence against women (661).

Having successfully contrived through political influence-peddling to have the Marchioness's husband exercise his patriarchal authority over her and "forbid the Marchioness to converse with the Duke, and in a Tone as if he wou'd be obey'd," Biron monitors her activities by means of his "Spies and good Intelligence" (658,659). Manley shows how Biron mounts a campaign of almost military

dimensions in his attempt to capture the Marchioness's heart, having all her servants as his front line troops, "Madame de Caria had not a Servant that was not in his Interest," and exercising his will in an attempt to control her movements or even psychically wound her into submission: "he would seem to dart them through, as if he were capable of divining what they said, as if nothing could 'scape his Penetration" (659,656). These images of darting and penetrating cover a range of subjection metaphors, from the subordinating gaze to the subjugating phallus, both of which are significantly connected by a more pervasively violent image of the conquering sword; but the darting image in this context also suggests a particular kind of victory in the conquest of the mask.

The means that Manley chooses for Biron's initial "Penetration" into Madam de Caria's secret self is highly suggestive, for the spying that lets him into her private world occurs in that most intimate area of her personal activities, where the lady would put on her face for society—the Toilet. From this relatively private place of physical transformations, one of her servants informs him of the Marchioness's penchant for disguise: "From one of those of her Toilet, he was inform'd, That she us'd to go often abroad in Disguise with the Lady Olympia, exchanging Habits with their Women" (659). This action of dressing up as "their Women" would, of course, not only confer anonymity on the two most prominent ladies of the court, but also liberate them from rigid social expectations of rank and enable them to go freely to dangerously free or open (carnivalesque) places such as "the obscure Part of the Theatre, where Operas and Comedies were represented" (659). The disruptive

freedom (or power) thus conferred on the disguised ladies suggests the ambivalent force of the masquerade, which Terry Castle points out (in Masquerade and Civilization) creates a peculiarly "revelatory" if problematic kind of action (4). The doubly suggestive actions of the masked lady in Manley's text embody the familiar masquerade topos which equates danger with revelation and reveals the meanings of dangerous preoccupations through concealment. Castle indicates that the masquerade was typically a "moral emblem, the image of a corrupt and pleasure seeking populace," and, in the paradoxical masking of depravity with delight, also "an indispensable plot-catalyst, the mysterious scene out of which the essential drama of the fiction emerged" (Castle, 1986 viii).

The secret activity undertaken when thus disguised is, as Biron perceives, in itself a disguise for Madam de Caria's "real Design" to meet the Duke with impunity and to reclaim for herself a degree of liberty she has smilingly relinquished for the sake of feigned wifely propriety "since to oblige her Lord and him, she disus'd any Publick Conversation with his Eminence" (659). Although this account of the Marchioness's obliging mask of obedience operates at one level to show her political artistry, it also satirizes the influential authoritarian directions given to young ladies in conduct books such as The Lady's New-Year's-Gift, where Halifax counsels his daughter to manage her husband "dextrously," and with "a great deal of nice Care," to "yield every thing" and turn "strongest Poisons" to "best Remedies; but then there must be Art in it, and a skilful Hand, else the least bungling maketh it mortal" (Halifax, 13).[8] Beneath Halifax's counsel to be "dextrously" passive (manipulative

rather), this medical metaphor injects a note of sinister reality, suggesting "mortal" consequences if the wife bungles in her arts or crafts and reminding us (as Manley frequently does) that women must always be mindful of dire social consequences for themselves when "Art" or "a skilful Hand" slips.

Manley similarly indicates that beneath Madam de Caria's "real Design" and "new Frolick," although artfully managed in a safe place of rural retreat, there lies a threat of crisis. Ominously overshadowed by the "Intelligence" of Biron, and occurring outside the normal bounds of court life "when the Court was at one of the Royal Villa's," this diversion that the Marchioness has devised carefully "in her Head" offers an opportunity for a dangerous crossing of social boundaries; the underlying conflict between what Madam de Caria has "in her Head" and Count Biron's "Intelligence" shifts the area of possibility from the liberation of a summer "Frolick" to the subjection of a violent intrusion (659). Manley's imagery here also parodies the background for a Miltonic fall from grace: significantly removed yet one more step from the regulating structures of courtly society, the setting for the encounter with Madam de Caria's lover is a "Gard'ner's House" with "large Gardens," and "excellent Fruit," situated one mile away from the royal villa (660). To some extent a carnivalesque place of freedom, where the disguise of "Country Girls" apparently lends further opportunity for transgressive release from the constraints of marital obedience, this ostensibly edenic milieu is riddled with uncertainty.

Alluding ironically to the dangerously tempting fruit of a lost paradise, Manley structures the narrative to demonstrate the ubiquitous presence of a spying Biron, the images of his jealous observations intertwined, snakelike, with images of the "innocent Frolick" in the garden (660). What Manley shows at one level to be a childlike game for the Marchioness de Caria—"her Heart was so set upon this Frolick, that she would not go to bed all Night, for fear of over-sleeping her self"—is at another level a chilling exercise in physical and psychological control for the Count, who observes and assesses the situation from a superior position in "an Upper-Room in that little House" of the gardener and his wife (660). Able to see but not to be seen, the Count is an embodiment of satanic watchfulness: "He planted himself behind a Window which commanded the Road that led to that little Rural-Habitation" (660). These images of commanding superiority, together with the image of fighting featured in his invented "Story" to the Gardener's Wife—"having fought a Duel that Morning, and desiring her to conceal him till the Search was over"—emphasize Biron's role as that of a hidden adversary and introduce violent undertones to the "innocent Frolick" (660).

When Count Biron surveys the garden from this upper room, Manley's allusive imagery indicates that Biron's presence is a malignant force, suggestive of Satan's "Spirit malign," in Paradise Lost III (553), enviously viewing the fair world below from a high place and determined to control it. As Isobel Grundy explains, this image of "the lofty observer" carries a "complex of associations" including that of the detached philosophical observer seen in passages from Lucian's Icaromenippus, or

the Sky-Man and Lucretius's De rerum natura II. Manley mentions Lucian (for his Varronian or Menippean influence) in the Dedication to Atalantis II and Lucretius (for his verse) in the text of Memoirs of Europe I (290); Dryden's translation of De rerum natura would have been known to Manley, whose appropriation of a corresponding maze image in this episode recalls the superior power of the onlooker:

> From thence to look below on humane kind,
> Bewilder'd in the Maze of Life, and blind. (10-11)[9]

The irony here turns on Biron's obvious lack of philosophical detachment in this scene where, despite his outward "Genius" which shows him "all Politician" to the world, he suddenly loses his presence of mind and takes hasty action:

> Jealousy made him raving mad, when he saw her enter the Garden, and observ'd the Duke to join her, and both of them to walk off into the Labyrinth, leaving her Woman to surfeit her self if she would upon the fine Fruit, that grew there in a great abundance.
>
> The Count, without asking himself what he design'd, follow'd after; though he did not know but that there might happen a Rencounter between his Eminence and him; he was resolv'd to disturb a Happiness he had no share in: But recollecting, like a true Politician, that if he could but decamp his Rival, the Benefit of that Morning's Masquerade might remain to himself; he thought his best way was to give the Duke an opportunity of seeing him without believing himself seen. (660-1)

Picturing the waiting-woman in the background, deliberately surfeiting herself on the abundant fruit, Manley points up the count's frantic dilemma between his sexual and political inclinations. The softly rounded vowels and whispered alliteration of the "fine Fruit" on which the woman surfeits herself immediately suggests the persuasive power of sexual opportunity which is just ripe for the taking.

Manley writes with studied irony on how the count approaches the "fatal Labyrinth" in his ferocious determination to "disturb" this "Happiness he had no share

in," the "raving mad" extreme of his jealousy undercut by the comic measures he undertakes to achieve his ends (661). The farcical actions of this politician endeavouring to seem unknowing, "approaching the fatal Labyrinth," where he "blow'd his Nose, he sung an Air; nay even read aloud some Lines out of a Book that he had in his Hand, all to make himself known," belies the ominous metaphors of battle in the passage where his reasoning is focalized (661). Yet, in making Biron appear briefly as a comic figure, Manley maintains her emphasis on the counterfeit show of a "Morning's Masquerade" which although it appears to be an "innocent Frolick," has already been shown as otherwise by recurrent imagery of violent conquest surfacing in the count's thoughts as they are focalized throughout the narrative. The series of militaristic images—"design'd," "Rencounter," "disturb," "decamp," "withdraw,"—show him planning an assault, which is effectively what he accomplishes (661). Although the lovers take "an immediate Alarm," at this intrusion into their secret place of "Pleasures" during an assignation "so private and well-concerted," and it is "thought best for the Duke to withdraw," all this particularly sexual innuendo marks Madam de Caria's decision to trust "to her Disguise" for protection as contradictory at best (661). If, as the language suggests, the "Lovers" are caught at the critical moment of penetration when the duke withdraws, then the reliance on a disguise that presents the Marchioness as a social inferior hardly protects her, seeming rather to expose her physical vulnerability.

During the initial masquerade, Madam de Caria, "dropping him abundance of affected Country-Curchies," begs for release, "pray'd him to be civil and to let her

go" (662). This appeal to civility adds to the ironical disjunction of the scene, showing the lack of correspondence between surface and deep structures of meaning: words such as "civil," acknowledging individual rights or freedoms, are meaningless when the balance of power shifts. Despite a nod in the direction of genteel propriety, Manley shows that any appeal to honour or civility will give no more protection to a lady in the habit of a country girl than to a country girl with the habits of a lady, for the rules here are no longer those of the court, but those of the field. Manley focalizes the count's coolly dismissive appraisal of the lady's "little apish, pretty Trick," in language that evokes the patronising indulgence of a captive animal by a sadistic hunter or owner. Quickly capitalizing on his superior position, the count strikes:

> The Count let her play over her little apish, pretty Trick, and considering her only in the Quality she appear'd, smoother'd her with Kisses, took the liberty of her Bosom, and some other Irregularities, which her Ladyship cou'd not so well defend her self from, nor yet seem'd to be much displeased at. (662)

Between not being able to defend herself and not seeming to be "much displeased" is an area of some confusion. Clearly her Ladyship is being taken "struggling" against her will, to some degree defenceless against a powerful adversary; yet, the syntactic double negative in "nor" juxtaposed with "displeased" subtly reinforces the impression of her being actively pleased.

Such a perverse approach to pleasure is further emphasized in the next sentence where Manley links the "Caprichio of Court-Ladies" with the twisted association in Biron's mind between secretly voracious female sexuality and the power of money:

> He had heard of the Caprichio of Court-Ladies, had been acquainted with something like it in the Course of his own Conversation, and therefore did not know but Madam de Caria might be brought, under the Disguise she wore, to do him that Favour, which would cost him a length of Assiduity, expence of Time and Oaths, in her own Person. Add to this, her imagin'd security from being known, and which above all things Women of pretended Honour are fondest of in their Pleasures; and the disappointment she had met with, from the Duke's being forced to fly. The Count running over in a moment, all these politick Considerations, took out a Purse of Gold from his Pocket, and dropped it into her Bosom. (662-3)

Throughout this enactment of Biron's labyrinthine reasoning (which seems like so much false logic), Manley traces a dynamic of corruption, her images marking a slick displacement from the hypothetical values of the court to the material values of the counting house. The duplicity of Biron's character is reflected in the doubtful meanings of words and phrases such as "in the Course of his own Conversation," "under the Disguise she wore," "her imagin'd security from being known," and "the disappointment she had met with" (662). The slippery movement of his thoughts "running over in a moment, all these politick Considerations" (663), rapidly skimming the surfaces of words, leaves the reader uncertain whether "his own Conversation" means descriptive words or sexual experience, "under the Disguise" means under the skirt or under the identity, "security from being known" means safety from sexual violation or the safety of anonymity, and "the disappointment she had met with" means either her sadness at seeing the duke leave or her sexual frustration at his withdrawal from intercourse. Manley brings all this archly suggestive metaphorical manoeuvring firmly down to earth in a definitive gesture which shows the actual direction of the scene. All cerebral "politick Considerations"

out of the way, the decisive tone of "took out a Purse of Gold from his Pocket, and dropp'd it into her Bosom" has the ring of venal truth to it, while through images describing a downward movement in gaze, intent, and meaning (663).

From the moment of its introduction, the "Purse of Gold" has a transforming effect on the Marchioness de Caria, who although this is hardly a shower of gold, Biron is hardly Jupiter and her shape (as opposed to the wooer's) is the altered one, is likened in a mock-heroic twist to the mythological Danae: "Her Ladyship was so far a Danae, that Jupiter himself must have woo'd her in a golden Shower" (663). Playing again on the dubious implications of status, power, and gender, Manley shows how the perverse logic of a misappropriated identity allows Madam de Caria to enact this mock poverty that conveniently erases the physical evidence of her powerful status, while it tests the physical drawing power of her looks. Satirizing the shallow posturings of this corrupt elite, the irony of Manley's focalized patrician comment that this sum of money "was a very great one for a Country-Girl," exposes the wry facility with which her Ladyship can effect a transformation in her emotional response to the money, regarding it en bas (from a peasant perspective) as if it were a "golden Shower," although en haut (from a courtly viewpoint) "that was no Sum to bribe Madam de Caria, at her own Lodging or in the Circle" (663).

Alternating thus between a higher and lower consciousness, Manley pitches her polemic at the contradictory functions of convenience and honour. The explanatory aside that the Marchioness has "a Soul so well fitted to the love of Money, that she set a great Value even upon the smallest Sum, and never car'd to

lose what she cou'd conveniently and honourably gain," smoothly equates the two positions "conveniently and honourably" (663). But what seems an innocent elision on the surface paradoxically covers and exposes a disjunctive truth: of the two, clearly, honour is not uppermost in her Ladyship's reaction to the count's sexual moves. The mobility of a response that shifts towards convenience rather than honour, is explained partly by Madam de Caria's vanity, for she "consider'd this as the real Effects of her Beauty, wherein her Quality had no part," but the bizarre metamorphosis in her perception of the aggressor—"she never lik'd him so well before"—implies a fickle distortion of identity or self-sufficiency for the sake of her own sexual incontinence (663).

Objectifying the ideological and psychological rebus of this encounter, the labyrinth setting also provides an analogue for Manley's intricate stylistic strategy. The repeated changes in focalization, passing back and forth from external to internal, from narrator to Biron and Madam de Caria, presents what Rimmon-Kenan calls a "plurality" of positions. In this scene the plurality of positions suggests an interplay between concurrence and opposition that provokes, in Rimmon-Kenan's words (after Bakhtin), "a non-unitary, polyphonic reading of the text" (1983 81).[10] Madam de Caria's decidedly non-unitary role is here underscored by narratorial asides commenting on the power of sexual energy to transform male appearances and overwhelm female resistance:

> There are amourous Graces and Airs, extreamly advantagious to some Persons; and they must be very disagreeable indeed, who do not become the Dress of Love, the Softness, the Languishments that he inspires: Those agreeable Ardors and active Fires, extreamly recommend even an

> indifferent Beauty. The Count scarce believ'd he durst be so happy as her feeble Resistance promis'd him; but to be as obliging as possible, he did not fail to give her Virtue the pretence of utmost Force on his side. 'Tis true, she did not call out, that was not very convenient, but she resisted as far as her Strength would permit. Alas! what is one of that weak Sex, in the Hands of a strenuous Lover, who leaves nothing to be added to his Endeavours of over-coming? Frailty is not only excusable at such a juncture, but indispensible, especially with Persons that are resolved to prevail whether one will, or no. (663)

These digressive comments on a conveniently transforming "Dress of Love," "the weak Sex," and the "Endeavours of over-coming" appear to be general statements about common experience, but also suggestively map out a rationale peculiar to the Marchioness's situation. Any sense of violence, or "utmost Force," is smoothly countered in the text by a smooth tone of rationality and language that demonstrates an easy transfer of values from what is expected—"obliging" her "Virtue" with "the pretence of utmost Force"—to what is convenient—"her feeble Resistance" (663). The psychology of transference—fitting the self onto others—also indicates an ability to fashion the world in one's own image, an ability which when viewed from a different perspective suggests the disturbing political power of this female machiavel and her equally manipulative "strenuous Lover" (663).

Manley's implication here represents the "Endeavours of over-coming" or assault of "that weak Sex" as a foregone conclusion when viewed in the context of a labyrinthine social structure that confuses dress with identity and gender with worth. This system allows a lady to claim physical liberty in the guise of a mere country-girl but denies her the authority to prevent any passing gentleman from taking flagrant liberties with her person (seizing the body equivalent to seizing personhood). The

satirical undertone stresses that although the Marchioness is playing a game with her body, engaging in a "Frolick" of disguise, the underlying reality is that of servitude, emblematized in the female rustic's body which proclaims her cheap availability simply through the habit that announces its inferior worth.

The questions Manley leaves open in this episode are whether the Marchioness de Caria is unknowingly trapped in her disguise, or knowingly puts herself in the position of victim for fear of exposure, or willingly allows the count to abuse her physical availability in order to complete the coitus interruptus. Although Manley's language leaves little or no doubt that Madam de Caria is forced into sexual submission, which plainly makes the encounter a rape, the implication (in several well placed asides) that she submits with pleasure to this violent exchange is sufficient to render her actions troublingly unnatural, even monstrously so. Such an implication of the monstrously unnatural obviously fills Manley's political aim (of discrediting Madam de Caria's topical equivalent, Sarah Marlborough) but the underlying message is not so simple. A closer examination of how the episode is fitted together reveals a less monological, more disruptive effect; evincing Garber's "category crisis," this episode shows how the border between master and slave is so easily "permeable" (Garber) that even in the most "well-concerted" attempts at freedom from social restraint women have been culturally pushed in the direction of enslavement.

Focalizing the thoughts of each character in turn, Manley's narration here explores the psychology of sexual aggression in a way that questions complex issues of power, gender, status and property through the <u>double entendre</u> of the disguise.

Madam de Caria's country-girl disguise covers her identity in order to liberate her from social or moral constraints but it is also paradoxically the material means of covering up a sexual assault which would normally be easily forgotten when committed upon a social inferior, "a sorry Country-Girl," by a "Lord" (663). The text's rapid changes of focus, moving from Biron to the Marchioness-as-country-girl and back again, signal displacement from one socio-political distinction to another: superior to inferior, male to female, master to slave, owner to owned. The arrangement of these inter-communicating areas is mirrored in the bewildering complexity of the labyrinth where the sexual assault is staged, Biron quickly catching "her disguis'd Ladyship," significantly "overtaking her," and bringing her "back to the most retired Part of it" (662). The doubleness of Manley's image here is not only belabouring a historical reality that such violations of the female must occur in "the most retired Part" of a cultural consciousness where they can be kept hidden from open inquiry, but the inextricable condition of entanglement also questions the social inequity that allows a "sorry Country-Girl" to be violated because her status is less. Emphatically seizing on the permissive sign of a rustic dress, Biron is empowered to ignore the disguised lady's "struggling, blushing, frowning, and dropping him abundance of affected Country-Curchies" for "considering her only in the Quality she appear'd" (662), he recognizes the established right (a territorial droit de seigneur) to do with her as he will. That Madam de Caria is acting this role so abundantly well—"the better to top her part" (662)—overtopping herself, as it were, in order to escape either discovery or capture adds further emphasis to the problematic function

of appearances for women who, over the centuries, seem often lost in a labyrinth of fetishistic fantasies constructed by men.

NOTES

1. For a helpful discussion of social and economic context from 1660-1750, see Ellen Pollak, The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope, (University of Chicago Press, 1985), particularly pages 44-47 on Halifax and page 68 on Halifax and Wollstonecraft:

> Indeed, as we have seen the very art of managing appearances—for which the coquette and prude are criticized—is actively encouraged in the wife. . . . Dissimulation on the part of women was not only permissible when it remained interior to a masculine desire, but it was often necessary to sustain the desired relationships of power.

2. Marjorie Garber discusses the ideological implications of patterns in film and literature which show transvestism appropriated in the service of " humanist 'progress narrative'" to show cross-dressing "can be 'fun' or 'functional' so long as it occupies a liminal space and temporary time period" such as the so-called "Halloween" of Provincetown or "green world" of Shakespeare. Garber emphasizes that she finds such appropriations "both unconvincing and highly problematic" because they "ignore the complex and often unconscious eroticism of such self-transformations and masquerades" and, reaffirming the "patriarchal binary," ignore "what is staring us in the face: the existence of the transvestite, the figure that disrupts" (Vested Interests 70).

3. Garber also discusses this in Vested Interests. She goes on to point out that the particular space in which the truth is often unmasked is the bed: "The scene of discovery—the particular locus in which the 'crime' of impersonation is revealed—is, as will be clear in a moment—highly suggestive for the cultural anxieties surrounding cross-dressing. In films, plays, and biographies, the discovery space is very often the bed, the place of sexual unmasking; in psychoanalysis, it is the mirror" (202).

4. Chatman points out that Genette distinguishes between the "distance" of an anachrony (portée) and its "amplitude." He goes on to explain: "Completive anachronies fill in lacunae—past or future" (Story and Discourse, 1978 65). Chatman cites G. Genette's article "Time and Narrative in A la recherche du temps perdu," trans. Paul de Man, in J. Hillis Miller, ed. Aspects of Narrative (New York, 1970), 93-118.

5. Cixous also writes about the female subject who makes herself evident through "woman's milk" which Sidonie Smith expresses (if one can use the term) thus: "Seemingly silent and repressed, woman comes to speak loudly as she intervenes in the phallic drive of masculine discourse with her alternative

language of fluid, plural subjectivity" (A Poetics of Woman's Autobiography 13). See Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Summer 1976): 881.

6. Garber discusses the so-called "third term" as follows:

> The "third" is that which questions binary thinking and introduces crisis—a crisis which is symptomatized by both the overestimation and the underestimation of cross-dressing. But what is crucial here—and I can hardly underscore this strongly enough—is that the "third term" is not a term. Much less is it a sex, certainly not an instantiated "blurred" sex as signified by a term like "androgyne" or "hermaphrodite," although these words have culturally specific significance at certain historical moments. The "third" is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge. (Vested Interests 11)

7. See Patricia Parker for a discussion on this and other "Motivated Rhetorics" in Literary Fat Ladies, Chapter 6.

8. See also a helpful discussion on this in Ellen Pollak's analysis of gender and ideology in eighteenth-century satire: The Poetics of Sexual Myth, 44-47.

9. See Isobel Grundy's enlightening study of Johnson, Samuel Johnson and the Scale of Greatness, 1986 165-169.

10. See Bakhtin's Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, 1984 (orig. publ. in Russian 1929), and Rimmon-Kenan's Narrative Fiction 81.

CHAPTER 4

"A Gin to catch unwary Fools": Persuasive Traps and Seductive Snares

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> Gin: a contrivance for catching game etc.; a snare, net, trap, or the like; an engine of torture, the rack; also a cunning stratagem, artifice, trick. (O.E.D.)

Reversing conventional expectations that the cuckold is both the butt and an elderly inferior in the love-triangle, in Memoirs of Europe II Manley explores the psychological dimensions of entrapment in an unusual déménage à trois* story, featuring Cicero, a lecherous old politician, Thais, an extravagant young wife, and Clodius, a handsome young husband, "with some Estate" who is cruelly supplanted by the older man (II 456). Here, Manley subverts the paradigmatic bold-gallant-cuckolds-citizen scenario, showing instead the "good-natur'd" young husband Clodius is both trapped and cuckolded when he is confined in gaol for a debt that is cunningly engineered by "impious" Cicero, presented as a demonic figure who stops at nothing to make Clodius's "ambitious" young wife, Thais, his mistress. The story is introduced by a series of portent-laden images such as "confusion," "Poison," "Anarchy," "Mis-rule" and "a Gin to catch unwary Fools" (II 448,449,450).

Although not necessarily linked so overtly to the specific image of a trap or gin, traps for the unwary or unsuspecting appear frequently in Manley's texts. The episodes that explore various types of entrapment reveal devastating psychological effects on the characters who are trapped, and suggest the kind of liminal space,

which (John Bender argues impressively) was provided by the old prisons, where the confined undergo transformations and, suffering a kind of death, lose their former status. Bender indicates that this liminal space is filled with ambiguity, confusion, or reversal and, as the title of a contemporary criminal narrative indicates, a view of Newgate was A Glimpse of Hell (T.H. 1704).[1]

A nouveau "Patrician," Cicero creates a private hell for his young rival Clodius, while maintaining his own ordered public persona. This outward shell, the narrator explains with some relish, low-born Cicero has (dung-beetle-like) expended considerable energy to transform: "by Birth a Plebeian" (II 442) he has risen "thro' this heap of Rubish, this dunghil of Obscurity" (II 443) by means of "Knavery, Deceit, Politicks, Pretences, Dissimulation, Craft, Hippocrisy and Zeal" (II 444) to "the Helm of Government" (II 446). The episode gives Manley an opportunity to expose public and private corruption in several different but interconnected ways: Manley's text crosses generic boundaries through an array of linguistic and formal strategies, foregrounding character as the site for transformations that mirror the ambiguity, confusion and reversals at play in the socio-political, no less than psycho-sexual arenas.

Manley's choice of imagery in the introduction to Cicero's story sets up the impression of his control, at "the Helm," as it were, in a tumultuous world: "Vast was his Memory and Vivacity, bold and ardent his Ambition, if yet in his little Vortex, where scarce he had room to move, the term be just; yet his Temper had so happy an Allay, as never to let his Passions precipitate him beyond the Relief of his

Judgment, which was so clear, so piercing, and so strong, that it seldom ever deceiv'd him" (II 444). Cicero's perverse character, although outwardly reflecting a favourable reversal of fortune, is nevertheless "Lustful, Proud, and Inexorable," prompting him to attempt destruction of the church and "all Principles" through the advancement of "Schismaticks" and "mercenary Pens" which poison the people (447,448). The resulting chaos throughout the nation is pictured in disruptive, carnivalesque images: "an enthusiastick, wild, lawless Spirit of Mis-rule succeeded" (II 449).

In order to enlarge on her own political purpose here, marking this lustful politician's seditious undermining of national stability, Manley chooses an episode which demonstrates Cicero's undermining of domestic stability. The argument is that if he can disrupt the home by stealing another man's wife under his very nose, then (quod erat demonstrandum) he can surely disrupt the nation through his ungodly reasoning which summons "Swarms of Atheistical Arguments" (II 449). When Manley writes about Cicero's "bold plausible Notions; calling the entity of the very Godhead into Dispute, making the Tremendous awful Misteries of our Religion but holy Juggles, the Arts of Priest-craft, and a Gin to catch unwary Fools," we see the larger, political implications of the story to come (449-50). Like the unscrupulous senator, Antonio, in the notable "Nicky-Nacky" scenes in Otway's Venice Preserv'd, Cicero's antics in the state are satirized by his antics in the bedroom.[2] The "prophane Study" and "bold, plausible Notions" which enable Cicero to destroy "the Dread and Necessity of Conscience" in the nation are precisely those which enable

him to conduct a bold, plausible seduction wherein the sanctity and commitment of marriage (its "Misteries") are reduced to a mere show of artful words (like juggling), or a trap for the foolish—"a Gin to catch unwary Fools" (II 450). Manley even underlines the obvious allegorical connections with a rhetorical question: "Why expend their prodigious stores of Learning to seduce Mankind, not only from their Duty but their Innocence?" (II 451). Exemplifying his political seduction of "Mankind," Cicero's seduction of Thais subverts all marital notions of duty or innocence; yet while he has made a caricature of the institutions of the state (the church and marriage), he himself outwardly retains a semblance of order.

Manley's narrator, Lord Albinus (Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, ambassador to Prussia), having established that the political consequences of Cicero's activities will unleash a flood of ruinous excesses on the people—"floods of Intemperance! Murder! Desolation! lawless Love! Avarice! and a complication of the mightiest Evils, will certainly overwhelm us!" (452)—Manley proceeds to characterize Cicero and Thais in similar language. While Cicero (John, Baron Somers) is "as Lavish as Artful" and Thais (Elizabeth Blount) has aged prematurely, becoming "an old, slatternly, ungain thing" through her "Excesses and Cosmeticks," poor Clodius (Christopher Blount), the cuckolded husband, is a catalogue of contrasting decency: "unthinking, free-minded, sincere, generous, without Design, Faithful, true to Friendship" (453). What then happens to Clodius during his imprisonment for debt accords with Bender's analysis of the old-style prisons as places where prisoners underwent (in Victor Turner's anthropological terms) a

"liminal" experience.[3] Associated with paradox and ambiguity, the experience occurs in a secluded place of confinement and enacts a symbolic death. Thus in the "Miseries of a loathsome Prison" where Clodius suffers confusing reversal "so ignominious, so monstrous, and unaccountable, that Clodius cou'd not believe it," to the extent that "then he sunk under his Anxiety of Mind, and was seiz'd with a Fever" (II 482, 483), the liminal space has a "double structure" and randomness that "can bring about real death" (Bender 26). Bender argues that seen from the point of view of "the carnival spectator temporarily subject to misrule," the danger in this liminal space depends "as in carnival, upon losing control within a demarcated arena where new patterns of life could be formulated" (Bender 27). Consequently, the larger social threat that emerges from the experience of a falsely imprisoned Clodius is that once the torrent of corruption is unleashed by a Cicero's "Dissentions, [sic] Untruths, Mischief and Confusion" (II 452) if not death, then madness (the kind of unnatural twist that for Clodius "turn'd his Brain") will follow (II 488). Manley presents pervasive reversals in this episode on different levels, even reversing the associations conjured up by names such as the "lovely Thais" who appears unadulterated (so to speak) in Dryden's Alexander's Feast, and Cicero, the eloquent, honourable, Roman orator and statesman, whose name is here attached to a monstrously inverted equivalent of the classical politician.

This sense of topsy turvy values operates throughout the episode. With a finely tuned awareness of pedigree, Manley illustrates that Thais's own excesses are entirely predictable in the light of her mother's improper character: this predatory lady,

singed, as it were, by the imperial flame, lusts after power and Caesar, using her "false taste of Wit" and "offer'd Favours" to elicit his disgust and demonstrate her own graceless "Impertinence" (454,455). Manley shows how this woman's character is misshapen through a promiscuous barbarity of spirit and misappropriation of opportunity: "Impertinence acquir'd by Travel, Misapplication, and as bad Construction of Things" (455). The lady is represented as a comic figure, chasing the king, who hides when she appears—"Caesar used to shrowd himself whenever she appear'd by the pretence of Business"; she is clearly one who knows no bounds, and "she wou'd invade his Ear and Closet whenever she cou'd force Access" (455). The bathetic impact of this Lady's fall from her former glory as an "Embassador" to the Iberian Court ("she took it as her Hemisphere of Glory, where she shone for some Years") is increased by a conversational aside from her hen-pecked emperor (454). This cavalier coup de grâce recreates the harried turn of phrase elicited from the reluctant object of misplaced affection in everyday (albeit witty) language: "Caesar said, 'Twas well for him she was gone, or she had certainly kill'd him in staying" (455).

The joking panache in this kind of dramatically revealing comment is repeated later in the story and resounds with the tone of Manley writing for the stage and playing to the pit. The briskly turned acid jest about Thais's mother self-consciously reveals its seriously barbed satiric undertone which cautions the reader against negligence and excess:

> A Lady made up of such nice Compounds, cou'd not be supposed to mind what she call'd the Drudgery of the Sex, Duty to her Husband!

> Education of Children, the Oeconomy of the Family! the first obey'd her, the second were left to themselves, and the last so wholly neglected by her, that when she dy'd, all Things were in disorder or rather despair; so little remain'd to the Daughters through her Negligence and Excesses, that they cou'd never hope to marry to any of their own Rank. (455)

Just as this characterization of Thais's mother demonstrates a reversal of the maternal role, the Lady's "nice Compounds" disordering the economy of the family because she is somehow made of the wrong stuff, so too in Thais's honeymoon speech, Manley overturns all readerly expectations of appropriately ladylike, innocent comment from the blushing bride. Manifestly following in her voluble mother's footsteps, Thais betrays her rank through the excessive impertinence of a crude sexual remark, for which Manley's narrator knowingly apologizes, "I should blush my self" (457).

That Thais has a character with a far from virtuous twist is already abundantly clear: "Thais's mind had quite another Turn; she neither valu'd Vertue, nor the appearance of it; her desire was to live at Ease in the World, at what rate soever purchas'd" (456). Viewed entirely in terms of commerce, Thais's marriage to Clodius enacts the material exchange of the card game at which she has "play'd away That which is most valuable in her Sex to an old Quality Courtier and Relation for five hundred Pieces" and then "told him she had a mind to screen her Conduct under the umbrage of a Husband, for fear of those ill accidents that are generally consequences of Irregularity" (456). This punning reference to an irregular menstrual cycle which signals pregnancy suggests a character which is artful, sophisticated and "never genteel" (457).

The wedding night scene that follows is clearly redolent of Restoration comedy and recalls Manley's skills as a dramatist. Clodius is pictured falling over himself with a mixture of strong drink and gratitude, anxious to "comply with the old Courtier's kindness, who had procur'd him so great a blessing as Thais," but this commercial transaction leaves him the loser, "overdos'd" and carrying "as little Understanding as possible to bed with his Wife" (457). The double entendre of this witless state into which he is drawn without "Understanding" foreshadows the events of his imprisonment and the sharp reaction of his angry, unfeeling bride also provides a farcical, yet revelatory piece of indirect characterization through speech. The risqué content of the speech "will let you into her Character" as Manley's narrator puts it, just as the individuated language distinguishes Thais's character from that of the narrator and from the traditional type of young bride, reversing the reader's expectations:

> She was very angry at the neglect of her Charms: When he wak'd, he remember'd something of the matter; it came into his Head that he was marry'd; he turn'd, and found himself not mistaken, There was his lovely Thais, but in what Humour you may guess from her Words! How do you do, my Dear? (says the Bridegroom, pretty much out of Countenance to see it Day, and that he had so negligently slept by her side) How do you feel your self? Are you well, my Dear ? I did not give a Thousand Pieces, she briskly answer'd, to feel my self! (457-58)

Although somewhat forewarned by the telling example of Thais's impertinent parent and the self-conscious apologies of the narrator to his audience, the reader is not entirely prepared for this narrative propulsion into the vulgar world of burlesque. The linguistic twist of a polite greeting into an improper comment on sexual activity achieves the unlikely truth-telling impact of ars macaronica, its hearty peasant base

mixed in with high flown sentiment and language.[4] Manley's deftly revealing switch across generic boundaries demonstrates here, as elsewhere, that within her witty control of textual form she inscribes messages about the slippery surfaces of social bounds, areas of uncertain, shifting meaning that show society always on the verge of collapse.

Thais's vulgar response is thrown into even sharper relief when considered within the framing discourse and the narrator's picture of Ethelinda, the princess who provides the polite counterpart to Thais's impolite self. In the high-flown rhetoric which precedes this story, describing Ethelinda's beauty in pastoral images, she is "Flora in all her Pride of Beauty," with "Zephers in her Train" to "drive far away the ruder Northern Blasts" (441). Here Manley weaves in her own artful wordplay: Ethelinda's "sweetly" smiling reply to the gentlemen who laud her powers to transform the present thus and "have forgot that there is any other Power but Ethelinda's" is a coy refusal to answer "such Hipperboly," but it goes beyond feminine noblesse. Dwelling particularly on the protean enchantment of storytelling, this passage provides reflexive comments on the power of language to make or unmake character (441). Even as the assembled nobles in Ethelinda's tent agree to while away the winter hours with stories that create another reality ("Thus we break the rigor of the Season, despite the falling Snow, congealing Air, and hanging Isacles; 'tis all verdant and agreeable amongst Objects so sensible and delicate" [441]), Manley entertains her readers with playful revelations about characters who embody

the antithesis to "Objects so sensible and delicate," characters like Thais and her mother, who insistently blow in, the "ruder Northern Blasts" of Momus.

Enchanted as these gallant male dignitaries are by Ethelinda's charms, their enchantment bears ironic comparison with that of Cicero, who is reportedly "bewitch'd to Thais" (442). What seems more likely in view of Cicero's calculating greed is that the young woman who believes she has "made a Conquest of that illustrious Heart" upon their first meeting at a "splendid Supper" in her husband's house allows herself to be entirely manipulated by the elder statesman (459). Thais, in turn, manipulates Clodius, who has already been persuaded to lend Cicero "a very considerable Sum" from his wife's by now somewhat contentious dowry—the ripely burlesqued "Thousand Pieces" (458-459). Manley employs this iterative imagery of commerce to illustrate the vulgar materialism which underlies the transactions between Cicero and Thais, no less than his dealings with the state.

Ironically, it is his public office, dealing with "Affairs of State and weighty Avocations," which lends the statesman his power to control or corrupt others (460). This reference to "Affairs of State" appears as the first excuse in a miniature dramatisation of the slippery rhetoric employed by Cicero to dupe Clodius out of his money. Manley demonstrates how Cicero's "change of Behaviour" strikes his friend, the solid "Vows" of friendship now disintegrating into something confusingly ambiguous: "those Professions, those Vows of sharing all Things with him, were degenerated into a stiff Formality, an outside Plausibility" (460). The double message

projected by outside plausibility and stiff formality is enacted in a series of oddly staccato but smooth excuses:

> Excuses that the Affairs of State and weighty Avocations call'd him from his Arms and Conversation—but he would find a Time—begg'd him to be no Stranger—there was nothing he wou'd not do to serve him—
> —something must be thought on—desir'd to be put in a way—at more leisure they wou'd discourse further—he was always so unhappy to be torn from him by Business—but the Affairs of the Empire—Caesar this moment expected him—pray come to Morrow—and to Morrow—they shou'd not for ever be interrupted—he was his most assur'd faithful and obedient Servant—and shou'd be proud to be commanded to the utmost. (460)

Cicero's words (with an appropriately unsettling echo of Macbeth's "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow")[5] are followed by Thais's equally condescending, equally manipulative responses to her "doating Husband" who is rapidly losing his way in a maze of words.

> But if ever Clodius interpos'd—Little Fellow—What did he mean?—Creature born among the People—Should he pretend to reduce her? —who knew the World by living in it, and not only in Prospect, as such Miserables as he did!—'Twas in vain to tell her, That their Circumstances not being agreeable to her Manner of Life, her Husband must necessarily sink under her Conduct, if she did not retrieve it.
>
> ---
>
> Either he was too remiss in his Attendance and Sollicitations, or Cicero did not think him capacitated for an Employment; tho' there were many in his Gift that did not require more Brains or greater strength of Parts than appear'd in him, for he was not the first Fool by twenty in very good Offices. She therefore charg'd him to succeed, or see her Face no more. (460-61)

Splendidly fitted for Menippean liberties of form and content, Manley's performance here is virtuoso, opening up gaps and problems of narrative voice and character with conscious wit. Her choice to write these passages as free indirect discourse enhances the characterization (showing the developing psychological twists of self) and serves

reflexively to mark the text's polyphonic literariness. The reader is made aware that Manley deliberately crosses boundaries, openly displaying plural functions in the text, the dialogic need for different voices, and the impact of language on the formation of character. When Cicero says "he was always so unhappy to be torn from him by Business" we can see and hear how Clodius could be persuaded that his "unhappy" friend is unwillingly "torn" away by the necessity of "Business," while still recognising the dismissive brevity of the lines. When Thais appears to offer encouragement while effectively denigrating her husband, we feel the increasing distress of his position. As Clodius's confusion mounts, the reader sees the trap shaped with growing clarity. Clodius is entangled and ultimately lost in an intricate web of words that snare him this way and that: he is caught by his false friend's professions that he is a "faithful and obedient Servant" and his wife's shrivelling condescension and mounting scorn that runs from a false endearment—"Little Fellow"—to a withering dismissal—"for he was not the first Fool by twenty in very good Offices" (II 461).

Manley's dramatic skills are in evidence when she inserts these passages which suggest interior monologue, but, even more effectively, she invites the reader to participate in the narrative process by opening up the enigma of Clodius's miserable condition. The narrator's imperative to "Behold here the miserable Condition of this doating Husband!" suggests that despite implications about the possible cloddishness of this character who dotes, the situation still retains a complexity that initiates questions about how decent (if not always swift) people fall into miserable traps (II

461). After the insight into Clodius's experience given by the reported discourse of his two antagonists, this exhortation to look at his miserable state posits the kind of question ("Who done it?" perhaps) which follows in the text: Manley's narrator asks "Who? Who did he follow?" (II 461) leaving the reader to ponder how Clodius could have fallen into such a trap. In opening such a hermeneutic gap which can only be partially closed, Manley displays the kind of narrative moves that give her stories what Wolfgang Iser[6] calls "dynamism," thus deepening the ambiguity or density of her texts and contributing, in Rimmon-Kenan's phrase, to "the reader's dynamic participation in making the text signify" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983 129).

Although Manley answers the question about whom Clodius has followed, the question of how the entrapment is successfully carried out is necessarily left somewhat open: it is hard to answer exactly how someone can trust those we already know to be untrustworthy. What signifies here is the marked emphasis on the contrasting characters of the two men. Whereas one has "Principles and good Nature," the other is a "Haughty Politick Statesman" whose character is lugubriously written into the unsettling affairs of the nation. Manley's focus on the personality of a man like Cicero who operates with "dark deep Designs, long sighted Projects of Futurity" in a public sphere where "every Machination was now upon the stretch to raise him to a height, from which he might securely laugh, and despise the little Malice and Envy of the Crowd beneath him," carries more than a hint of her interest in the stage villain (such as Osman in her heroic tragedy The Royal Mischief) whose flourish of scheming treachery clearly serves Manley's polemical intent (462). Yet,

within the narrative, these visual images of superior height, machination, stretching, and mockery reinforce an unusually acute awareness of the psychological impact that entrapment (a form of torture) has on the victim. We recognize that the "dark deep Designs," and "long sighted Projects," so threatening to the nation's "futurity," promise a private disaster for Clodius (II 462). It becomes evident that one does not have to be stupid to be duped, merely trusting and faithful in the grip of ruthless opportunists.

Like the little people in the "Crowd" who look up to see a securely laughing Cicero despising those beneath him, Clodius and his wife face a devastating reversal of fortune ("attending upon Cicero, made their little Affairs run to ruin in the World"); but the narrator repeats that it is "unhappy Clodius" who suffers personal ruin "every way" based on Cicero's "deceitful Promises" to serve him "upon the Faith and Honour of a Friend" (II 463). The alarming uncertainty of meaning in Cicero's public or private "Word" (463) comments on a widespread public uncertainty about how politicians construed the notions of faith and honour. This confusion about meaning also points to the mixed messages which cause psychological confusion in those who are victimized, manipulated by their abusers into a state of unhinged isolation from any reality other than that which is forced upon them. To say that Manley is here conducting a study of psychological isolation is perhaps an assumption avant la lettre, but her narrative method and image patterns offer convincing insight into the frightening world of the socially isolated and politically disenfranchised.

The imprisonment of Clodius is described in expressive language which achieves the kind of "pathetic intensity" Jerry Beasley sees in Manley's writing:[7] "frightful Poverty staring native Modesty out of his Face, the poor, the wretched deceiv'd Clodius was seiz'd by his merciless Creditors, and carry'd to a common Prison" (464). After calling for his "dearest Thais" to assist him, Clodius advises her to implore Cicero in person for the money owed to them. The reversal in Clodius's fortune is not yet answered by a change in Thais's natural sympathies, although the delayed temporal deictic "not yet" implies that the reverse will occur: "Thais was not yet so abandon'd, so out of her Sex but that she felt the Tenderness that another wou'd at so deplor-able a Sight" (464). Stressing the irony that one would expect a wife to feel more than just "another wou'd," the narrator dwells here on how Thais is outwardly affected by an almost disdainful perception ("so deplorable a Sight") of a situation which is framed by the distancing glance of condescension (464). The sight imagery effectively objectifies what would conventionally be a deeply moving inner experience which Thais later assumes entirely superficially, like a garment: "THAIS adorn'd in moving Sorrow went to Cicero's Palace" (466). The fearful actuality of the prison is not expressed in terms of its impact on Clodius, who has in a curiously unselfish way already stepped out of himself, his only fear being that Thais should one day face this "loathsome Confinement," or feel the terrifying inhumanity of the hellish place where he is incarcerated:

> . . . must I be condemn'd to this cruel Separation, or what is more cruel, see her a Partner in my Wants and Miseries, to share the Fatigues and Necessities of a nauseous Prison? her Limbs extended for Rest upon a Bed so detestable, 'twou'd fright away the very Prospect of any; sleep

> as heavy as he is, never laid his leaden Scepter upon any, under this detested Roof, how wretched and overwatch'd soever! Here's no Forgetfulness, Grief can't so much as nod in an aboad like this. (II 465-466)

Manley's decision to switch viewpoints here by detailing the actual physical and emotional distress of "a nauseous Prison" not (in the obvious way) from the prisoner's but from his beloved wife's point of view serves a dual function: it gives further insight into his faithful character and enacts the dynamics of a story that explores split perceptions of truth in divided lives. When Clodius speaks of "her Limbs extended for Rest upon a Bed so detestable, 'twou'd fright away the very Prospect of any," we are graphically reminded that the diurnal torment of this physically nauseating experience (lousy and noisome at best) is matched only by its erosion of sanity through sleep deprivation and fear.

In ironic contrast now to the pathetic picture of a ruined, imprisoned Thais thus conjured up by her "unhappy Husband," who pleads not to be "entirely abandon'd to his evil Destiny" (466), Thais is promptly shown in all her coquettish glory, wearing the mantle of grief, while her youthful body and face glow and pulsate with raw sexual energy, altogether overturning any expectations that the "dress of Sorrow" bears meaning (467). Her plan to appeal to Cicero in the most impressive visual sense is a cynical decision to buy into a particularly base sexual economy:

> The Lady had so much Sense as to consider Sorrow never but unwillingly enters the Closets and Chambers of the Great. Pity and Compassion are the weakest of all the Passions: She would therefore attempt him by that of Gratitude, re-inforc'd with powerful Auxiliaries, that of lovely Eyes, glowing Youth and complexion, rising Breasts, agitated by Fear and Reverence of his Grandeur, rather than remorse for her Husband; few, very few become the dress of Sorrow. (467)

After the significantly tongue-in-cheek comment about pity and compassion being "the weakest of all the Passions," with its implication that sexual passion is strongest in Thais's pneumatic breast, the reader's attention is guided (in the manner of Thais's footsteps) away from Clodius's prison cell into the "Closets and Chambers of the Great," where a predatory Cicero waits for his "tender" quarry, "his Blood already in an agreeable agitation, mantl'd or rather flush'd" in anticipation of an easy conquest (II 468). That this is an easy conquest becomes evident at the outset in the florid over-emphasis on Thais's response to the novelty of a lover: "Those unabated Ardors! that extremity of Fire! height of Rapture! keenness of Embrace!" (II 469). The breathless hyperbole which colours Thais's narcissistic viewpoint expressed in these lines is then neatly undercut by Manley's dry observation that all this is "deadned by long and sure Possession" (II 469). This double-edged quality of gushing and cutting runs throughout the episode, alerting the reader to the two-faced, double-dealing characters of Thais and Cicero, and the confusingly ambiguous reality that is forced upon Clodius.

At this point, where the focus is on the various physiological manifestations of sexual arousal, the narrative changes direction to digress from its examination of Clodius's plight in his prison world. Clodius is temporarily forgotten, pushed aside in a way that reflects Thais's and Cicero's turning away from both propriety and truth: "Wretched Clodius was not so much as mention'd, this Interview took quite another turn, one very different from the forlorn Condition he was reduc'd to" (469). So saying, the narrator takes a "very different" turn and Clodius is indeed barely

mentioned in the story for twelve pages. What the reader is given instead is a series of lurid vignettes that show Thais and Cicero conniving to secure their adulterous commerce through measures "crafty" and speeches "as wicked, as impious" as Cicero can muster (478), while keeping their debauchery "conceal'd from all the World" (479).

This future-oriented delay allows Manley to explore in some detail the appetitive excess of the adulterers' "forbidden Joy" and the labyrinthine coils of their attempts to avoid detection. In narratological terms, the delay, according to Rimmon-Kenan, "turns the reading process (or one of its aspects) into a guessing game, an attempt to solve a riddle or a puzzle" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983 126), and, as Barthes indicates, it introduces devices such as snare and equivocation (Barthes 1970 75). This delay, or dilatio in the rhetorical tradition, suggests, as Patricia Parker indicates, a text that is gendered feminine, the complex associations of the term with female enchantresses (such as the Odyssey's Circe, or The Faerie Queene's Acrasia), springing from dilatio's "curious combination of difference and deferral, dilation, expansion, or dispersal in space but also postponement in time" (Parker 1987 9). Characteristically plural in her methods, Manley uses this device to reveal the multiple perceptions of events in this episode; while showing the passage of time through the eyes of the adulterous pair and suspending the narration of the victim's experience, his isolation and subsequent derangement are all the more keenly felt.

The rhetorical dilation and delay of the narrative provides both textual and ontological space for Manley's study of character, her recurrent interest in how the

self shapes or is shaped by different realities, here focused on two characters who are grotesque in their personal excesses. Thais is represented as outwardly beautiful, captured (as in portraiture) in the dewy bloom of youth, her luxuriant fullness figured as a female landscape which offers itself in various wantonly opening or artfully closing prospects to the gaze of the proprietory viewer (in this case Cicero). Manley shows that Thais's bounty, like the carefully controlled landscape garden, is artfully contrived to misrepresent as "unknowing" (II 472) a woman who knows precisely what her designs are.

> Her Gown was a pale Pink, suitable to the darkness of her Hair, lin'd with a rich Gold Stuff, all careless and easily to be dispos'd of at the Lover's Wish; which way soever she mov'd it was obedient to the Touch, and discover'd her swelling Breasts, part of her Limbs and Arms, or her slender Waist, that had nothing under the Gown but a linnen Covering; no Statue cou'd be handsomer or whiter than her Legs and Feet, half cover'd with Sandals of Silver and Pearl Embroidery; she knew her Beauty, and where it was most conspicuous, with a seeming undesigning Art, the lovely Wanton mov'd her Limbs as if unknowing of the Motion, and gave to the Lover's Sight a Landskip of inevitable Charms! her Eyes, her Dress, her Hair set off by those Aurora Ribbons that ty'd her Night-cloaths; her every Grace became so conspicuous, that all Cicero's Senses united in that One of Sight. (II 472)

Dressed with the exotic richesse of the seraglio, Thais, like an odalisque, is offered up delectably for consumption. Despite this visual and tactile banquet of the senses (or perhaps because of it), the forgotten shadowy figure of Clodius (who is sensually deprived in his isolated prison cell) re-asserts his presence here and colours the "perfect Beauty" of Thais to render it distinctly otherwise. When seen in the context of the abandoned husband, this "seeming undesigning Art" with which Thais offers her sexual bounty to Cicero transforms her shape into something unexpectedly

grotesque. Here, as the text asserts, appearance predominates, but although all Cicero's senses are "united in that One of Sight," for the reader seeing is not believing. What might be seen in a different light to be the visual perfection of her form, richly arrayed in splendour, becomes a lewd display of material excess and spiritual poverty; beauty is satirically overturned to show her gracelessly "conspicuous" nether regions.

If Thais metamorphoses before our eyes into an embodiment of the immoral grotesque, Cicero simply grows more monstrous with the development of the narrative. After showing Thais hurriedly decamping, pulling apart and leaving the marital establishment with chilling speed and efficiency in one night ("in pulling down the Furniture and packing up, she was so extreme diligent, that by Morning all Things were ready" [478]), Manley stresses Cicero's sexual monstrosity in lurid detail. The two are shown to be literally engaged in pulling apart the fabric of honourable or decent society. What is initially expressed in the conventional language of love as Cicero's "profuse professions of Joy" at the prospect of his new mistress, is next shown as revoltingly unnatural perversion. Returning briefly to Clodius, Manley juxtaposes images of vigorous youth to describe him—"One in prime of Youth, and Passion! full of immortal Vigour and bounding Force!"(480)—with images of physical decay to describe his enemy. Manley heaps withering scorn on the rakish older man: "hoary venerable Cicero" whose "ebbing Blood runs backward to the Fount of Life," who "Apes the glowing Lover!" is "weigh'd down by Diseases

and Politicks" and with "scarce warmth dully to circulate the lazy Tide, which slowly creeping in his frozen Veins," is also "monstrous to Nature!" (II 480-81).

The growing gulf between the characters of the two men is ultimately demonstrated in the control (or lack of it) exercised by each over the contrasting worlds they inhabit. While Cicero's life is increasingly filled with sickening debauchery over which he exerts tyrannical power, Clodius's world is reduced to subsisting on charity within the confines of the prison where he controls nothing, and becoming mentally enfeebled, he finally loses his mind: "his Misfortunes and Length of Confinement had not only dull'd, but turn'd his Brain" (II 488). Cicero, assisted by Thais, rules over an empire of corruption, where he is venerated like the decaying, mummified remains of a defunct (but still mysteriously empowered) eastern potentate. Preserved only by the tricks of bizarre lotions and potions, "the ultimate of Chymistry," elaborate restoratives, "heightning Cordials! rich Elixirs! costly Baths! strengthning Oils" and "the Magisterium that is said to have the wonderful Power to restore decaying Nature, renew or stop departing Youth" (II 484), Cicero's repellently cadaverous image lingers over the narrative as a gruesome political caveat. Manley's vigorous anatomy of this vile character takes on such a life of its own that it becomes more than a damning representation of a political figure; it excoriates a whole system.

Thus fuelled by the products of "Elaboratories" and "Furnaces" built for him by Thais, old Cicero dines (and dies) anew on a surfeit of young flesh, "expiring with Pleasure, dissolv'd in Delights" as a bevy of "half-naked, dazling" virgins is served

up by Thais to sate his lust: "she directed him to the firm, swelling, snowy Breast, the turn of Limbs, the taper Waist, and those unseen Beauties which she as industriously disclos'd as others conceal" (II 484,485). Even as Clodius is starved of human contact and suffers the psychological death that turns his mind, Cicero, "a diseas'd old decay'd Politician" (II 492), is massaged, "chaff'd," oiled, serenaded, and erotically stimulated back to life in unimaginable ways, "new and unthought Enjoyments," enacted for him by child prostitutes procured and obscenely trained for him "with mighty Cost and Pains" by Thais, "their Corrupter" (II 485).

Perhaps the most shocking of the multiple reversals in Manley's story of Thais, Cicero and Clodius is the picture of Thais's metamorphosis from charming wife to lewd procuress. Thais is described in disturbing detail, engineering power of monstrous proportions for herself through her actions as the "Corrupter" of "Virgins," entrapping those beautiful "She-Slaves" and "amorous Devotees, whom she caused to be fetch'd from Greece," like so many disposable commodities. Central to Manley's description of Thais's crudely commercial enterprise (for which Cicero "rewarded her with ten times a larger Hand, for that Bliss she procur'd him by others, than for what ever she had bestow'd upon him of her own") is the cynically instructive analysis of supply and demand applied to the passage of these young women's lives, which are represented as the cheap coin of a tawdry realm:

> These she instructed in the Arts of loose lascivious Love; and still as they grew stale to Cicero, and that he was sated with 'em, she sent 'em off Slaves to the Islands that were subjected to the Empire, and supply'd his depraved Age and Fancy with new Beauty. (II 486)

In the image of slaves sent off to islands "that were subjected to the Empire" Manley also recreates a disturbing socio-economic actuality. For these young women (evidently girls) who are so vulnerably youthful that they are "too Young to have a true Sense of Decency or Virtue" are themselves "subjected" to an evil "Empire" of criminal entrapment which enslaves and then disposes of them summarily once they, like perishable goods, have grown "stale" (II 485-86).

Thais's corrupting activity as procuress presents a jolting inversion of the actively maternal, salvatory role played by the encircling female presences in Atalantis's framing narrative. Whereas in the later Memoirs of Europe Thais entraps the beautiful young innocents by using her power destructively in order to snare both the young virgins and her depraved old lover, the guiding female figures in the earlier text of Atalantis present a contrasting picture of constructive feminine power. The second volume of Atalantis features Astrea, Virtue, and Intelligence, displaying their collective supernatural powers to rescue a beautiful young innocent from a trap. Shortly after the narratologically involved Mrs. Nightwork episode, where the goddesses and Intelligence effectively step out of their framing discursive space by engaging in animated conversation with the midwife before and after she delivers the child, Manley shows the three framing female figures again discovering an "Adventure" (I 591). Upon first hearing a woman's "Shrieks," they observe the scene of her distress and step forth into another moonlit scene, this time to rescue "the Beautiful, the Innocent Elonora" (I 591-92). Through the agency of these delightfully disputative, analytical beings, Manley plays with generic and ontological

boundaries, questioning the notions of appearance and reality, while satirizing in conversational asides the possibility of divine intervention in human affairs. Manley achieves her familiar multi-layered effect in a scene which has, notwithstanding its serious political content, subtly comic overtones:

> Ha!—are not those Shrieks like as from a Woman in distress? They sound from that obscure Quarter on the right of us: Good your Divinities let us approach; and if it be necessary assume a Visibility to succour the Unhappy.
>
> Virtue.] Do you think, my dear Astrea, that 'twould be difficult to decide, whether my Lady Intelligence be agitated by a principle of Curiosity or Charity?
>
> Astrea.] Charity, doubtless. She will tell you that upon this Occasion, she could not be Charitable if she were not Curious. Ah! see, as we approach, there's a Gentleman who appears of Fashion, making all the haste he can from a Lady, whom probably he has distress'd; she remains after him upon the Seat; let us go to her, she may possibly want our Assistance.(I 591)

This Menippean mixture of the dramatic and quasi-philosophical is intertwined with the paradoxically human banter of the goddesses, who cluck away in a maternal fashion. Quizzing the errant "my Lady Intelligence" rather tartly as if in absentia, they enact a stock motherly ploy of indirectly pointed questioning to determine her motive for meddling or finding it "necessary," in Intelligence's own typically officious terms, to "assume a Visibility to succour the Unhappy" (591). Similar to the Mrs. Nightwork episode, this voluble exchange between the observing allegorical figures shows the urge for knowing tangled up in the social imperative of doing, for although Astrea acknowledges the subjunctive possibility that the lady "may possibly want our Assistance," the narrative action exhorts "let us go to her" (591). This cross-border manoeuvring in and out of narrative spaces in itself illustrates a kind of

epistemological trap or snare, for in seeking only to know true meanings, as the goddesses ironically acknowledge, it becomes humanly impossible to act. Through the actions of her super-lunary female figures Manley suggests that it is indeed "necessary" to "assume a Visibility" not only as ministering divinities with reforming zeal to "succour the Unhappy" but also as actively female participants (mothers, daughters, sisters, midwives, friends, assistants) in the process of narrative exploration which in turn explores the traps and snares (psychological, social, political) of life.

The place into which the three are enticed is significantly described as "that obscure Quarter on the right of us," a deliberate allusion to the topicality of the situation at hand and an indication of the ubiquitous snares for the unwary (or unworldly) that lurk just around the corner, in society's shadier places. In keeping with her interpretive role, Intelligence eagerly introduces the characters who appear before the three invisible presences near "that long Walk of Trees" in the Tuilleries (St. James's Park) and close to Count Orgueil's Palace (Buckingham House), "late the Ornament of the Place, till that towering Pile before us threatens to over-bear it" (590). Manley's particular interest in this has its customary political context in that Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, unimpressed by costly Blenheim, actually raised the palatial stakes by building her own tasteful pile in response to Buckingham House in 1709, the year Manley published Atalantis.[8] Presented as a labyrinthine trap of architectural rivalries ("'Tis said he is every Day consulting how to equal his, to the proud height of that Building"—an impossible match to win), Manley's carefully

placed setting reinforces ideas of gamesmanship and physical entrapment, figured forth in an arena of outward elegance, but inner instability: "If the Foundation be not of Strength to support those Additions, he will however, by superficial Raisings, and out-side Ornaments (as are most of his) fit it for Show, since not for Use" (590).

This initial focus on the outward shell of a superficially impressive but ill-founded structure acts as a metaphor for a crumbling social structure, which although outwardly elegant, is, Astrea points out, fundamentally flawed because of its "dangerous" vices, such as gambling. The trope of the structurally unsound building is taken up again in the framing comments by the goddesses, particularly in Astrea's diatribe against the pitfalls of "this modish Taste, this fashionable Ruin, this inexcusable Destruction!" (644). Calling for the abolition of "Gaming"—which Virtue sees as foundation for the decay of family structures, particularly in its effect on women who become "bold, avaritious, designing, unmerciful, neglectful Mothers, insupportable Wives" (I 645)—Astrea presents gambling as the potential downfall of the entire civilized world, from "Universities and Academies" to "empty Theatres" (642,643). In contrast to love, which is a "Sin of Nature" (642), Manley stresses that gambling, like the political "Gin to catch unwary Fools" (II 450), becomes a snare for the inexperienced who are entrapped into losing thousands by professional gamblers who undermine the foundations of "Worthy" society: "Or how vain and fruitless must be the Foundation of their Hopes, to think, that they, who never made Play but their

Diversion, should be upon the square with indigent Sharpers, who have run thro' all the Practice and Mystery of the Die and Cards" (641-2).

Since the issue at hand is one of "the Appearance of Things," seeing and believing are much examined in this episode. Intelligence's exclamatory "O Heavens! what do I see?" (592) begins the story and adds emphasis to the importance attached to surface values, the evident meaning of a discourse which functions in narrative entrapment to trick the narratee into believing a false construction of reality because he or she is unable or unwilling to examine other possible layers of meaning beneath the story's seeming evidence. Through the words of Elonora, the one who is deceived in this tale, Manley enacts a moment of generic self-consciousness, pointing to the narrative's pressing need to be told for the purposes of justification and explanation:

> You have indeed saved my Virtue, but may undo my Reputation of Honour, if you run away with the Appearance of Things, and do not suffer me to justify my self as to that particular of finding me alone with my Lord of——— at an Hour so blameable, and a Place so suspicious. (I 592)

Intelligence's reply continues the reflexive play on story and meaning, genre and gender, when she avers "Believe me, there is nothing I more desire; it is not my Principle to run away with Appearances. I love to be minutely inform'd" (592).

The desire to be minutely informed plays on the idea of gossiping female discourse; but Manley's structuring of the narrative goes beyond this simple characterization of Intelligence's curiosity to take up the idea of feminine expansiveness in a formal enactment of digressive dilatio. This strategy enables her

to postpone the actual reason for Elonora's being discovered in this suspicious situation until the end of a convoluted forty-eight-page saga. That this extended discourse is both an exhaustive and pleasurable product of female experience is attested to by Elonora's concern that she has "so many Particulars to relate, before I can set this Adventure in a proper Light, that I fear I may tire your Companions" (593). To assuage Elonora's fear, Virtue answers, "Something speaks so innocently beautiful, in all you say or do! that next to the Pleasure of having reliev'd you when distress'd, we shall find the greatest in knowing what occasion'd it" (593). Virtue's gracious response to Elonora's worries suggestively draws out the tale and invites the young woman to step forward from a threatening place of isolation to one of reassuringly expressive feminine sanctuary. This creative drawing out of painful discourse ironically embodies both the female agencies present in the reproductive act of labour and the sympathetic nurturing of others which sets woman's work apart from man's in the accepted social sense.

Elonora's history begins with her birth and explains her dire circumstances (from the standpoint of the narrative present) through tales within tales, which accumulate in involved mise-en-abyme fashion to demonstrate the complicated monsters with whom she has become entangled in the marriage market. The contrasting background against which her labyrinthine history is set shows Elonora ill-prepared for life's ensnaring complexities, having come from a family filled with "Tenderness" and "Goodness," headed by a loving mother and an elder brother whose "Conversation" contained "all that cou'd be moral, indearing and plain" (593,594).

The good, plain characteristics of these uncomplicated figures in Elonora's background act as a contrasting norm against which her bête noir, Antonio, appears "by melancholly Proof" particularly dangerous or "unfathomable" (596). Indeed, the ruinous game he plays with her operates in the realms of the epistemologically unfathomable, the narrative line twisting in and out of different stories (his, hers, other characters') to reveal an intricate consciousness working through the text. In the process of uncovering how Antonio leaves Elonora caught in a perplexing maze of falsehood, Manley gives an emphatic demonstration of character as a central element in this narrative exploration of illusion and entrapment.

This focus on characterization operates on different levels in Manley's writings. An important aspect of her satirical method is an iterative concern with psycho-political manipulation: she anatomises both the characters who twist others' experience and those who are manipulated. Here, as in other stories throughout the novels, Manley's narrator becomes engrossed (a verb voiced by the garrulous midwife, Mrs. Nightwork, as an illustrative act of compounding one's worth through amassing gossip) in her attempt to "justify" her "self," minutely examining the shaping of that self by the circumstances, tricks, or snares that also characterize her particular narrative (592). Elonora's story is comparable in this instance to Manley's detailed study of character in the Thais, Clodius and Cicero episode, which explores multiple perceptions of events to show different angles of the story, various constructions of events, and their ultimate effects on the mind of the increasingly isolated, befuddled victim whose world is turned upside down, in the manner of the

liminal prison experience, leading to a figurative or actual death. This probing of the victim's psychological puzzlement, resulting from his or her antagonists' conscious twisting of information, suggests both the labyrinthine workings of the mind (which can either concoct or attempt to decode illusory signs), and the often deadly moves of socio-political games with convoluted rules, constructed deliberately to baffle the innocent player or victim.

Manley's detailed focus on character in these analyses of entrapment is particularly interesting in the context of current narrative theory, for both Linda Hutcheon (Narcissistic Narrative, 1984) and R. Rawdon Wilson (In Palamedes' Shadow, 1990) mention authorial strategies of characterization which imbue the metafictional text with a kind of creative "freedom" (Hutcheon, 67). Wilson, specifically referring to epistemologically powerful games of narrative entrapment, appropriates John Fowles's term "godgame" to discuss the "web of illusion" created by some game-like narratives, which have "more to do with the questions of characterization than with myth, archetypal resonances, or narrative structure (though these could not be altogether excluded from consideration), and no useful account could be given that did not proceed from a grasp of the theory of character" (Wilson 149).[9]

Manley introduces the reader to "The Beautiful, the Innocent Elonora" through her lengthy "unfortunate Relation" of artifice and stratagem that shows her increasingly entrapped by Antonio and others, her lack of wordly experience (or outright simplicity) making her an unequal match for an opponent such as the devious

Antonio. So unfathomable are the depths of Antonio's complex character to Elonora that she confesses herself unequal also to the task of portraying an outward "Gentleman" whose inner workings are informed by the labyrinthine metaphor that Manley aptly chooses to describe his mind:

> Whoever wou'd draw a true Resemblance of this Gentleman, ought to have more Skill in Painting than I have, his Person excepted; there 'tis easy to represent him; but his Mind! His Mind a Complication of seeming Good and real Evil is impenitrable! He lends the Clew to none; there is no searching the Recesses of his Breast! 'Tis all dark and benighted to the attempting Invader. (594)

In this characterization of a dark, villainous figure, Manley manages to paint a combination of mental, physical and narrative acts which reflexively draw attention to the whole process of narrating complex characters. At the same time, Manley's portrait of a labyrinthine mind that enacts cunning plots of "real Evil" allows this fictional entity a free passage over generic boundaries: occasionally he springs dastardly from the page, coloured with the stark chiaroscuro of one of Manley's earlier stage villains, and, at other times, his picture registers the subtle internal hues of novelistic detail. Antonio's character is represented in various ways, from the familiar posturings of an almost stock Machiavel (an echo of Congreve's paradoxically treacherous but authoritative Maskwell[10] in The Double Dealer), to the less predictable inner dialogues that shape a novelistic endeavour of psychological verisimilitude.

Elonora's attempt then to describe this evil genius after her protestation of insufficient skill is an ironic masterpiece of characterization techniques. Her description traces the paradoxical play of visual contrasts in the outer man, whence

the contradictory nature of the inner man emerges. Antonio's appearance is represented as a handsome shell or mask, coldly colourless, despite playful blue eyes, for his skin is so white that "even his Lips and Cheeks want that Vivacity that his Youth may expect" (595). This characterization by appearance continues with a modified stroke to the eyes, which predictably mirror a discordant soul, for the blue eyes "full of Sweetness and Play" are only so when "his Soul is in tune" which is "not often, because his Temper is ruffled at Trifles" (595). Antonio, as Manley outlines him, could be a study in paranoia and negative transference. Gripped with the sense of his own manipulative "Self-Interest," he can only see the same unhealthy proclivities in others: "He suspects; he doubts; he objects; he does all things necessary to bespeak his Diffidence, resolving never to be deceived, he never trusts" (595). This disjointed self is thus reflected in Manley's choppy catalogue of sociopathic positions.

Elonora's acute perceptions of Antonio in the narrative present emphasize her inability to read his character in the narrative past, an inability shared by many others because Antonio's outwardly smooth persona is so carefully manufactured that even "the most wary are deceiv'd by him" (596). Whereas Antonio seems to fit the form of a "Gentleman," Manley's description delights in probing the ruptured viscera beneath the surface, while commenting tartly on the easy exchange of social decorum: "But his Person and Address pleads for him, and saves him any other Expence" (597). In a damning analysis after which Elonora utters the reflexive confession that she has been "the more particular in his Description, that you may the better judge of

him," Manley's barbed language displays a satisfying forensic intensity as she anatomises the psychological shape of this "wicked" character, whose heroic-villainous proportions are neatly chopped up in the axiomatic cut, "Antonio is not wise but cunning" (596). Since Antonio is not identified in the key, it is tempting to read Manley's energetic hatchet job on this anonymous figure as a character study accomplished for the pleasure of dissecting a carefully constructed social self which is a studied example of materialism (perhaps in Manley's party political terms, sheer whiggishness personified). Her tendency to satirize the inherent vulgarity of these villainous types through a cumulative array of monetary metaphors is combined here with a deliberate focus on the dual nature of his character figured forth in such verbal oppositions as "Conscience" versus "Self-Interest" and "Study" versus "Mischief" (596, 597).

Antonio's actions, particularly his reading habits, are shown to constitute a divided consciousness: even as he is narrowly directing his attentions to "the Opinions of those Philosophers and Atheists, that concludes this World to be the All of Life we ever are to taste," his purpose is to expand his potential for self-indulgence, thus giving himself broader scope to express the solipsistic limits of "Self-love," for "even Love, tho' his Temper is Amorous, can't make him liberal" (596, 597)). Each observation on this character's apparent form is promptly reformulated in the text to show that any appearance of enlightenment turns out to have a contrary purpose: "That Study which at first seem'd a meritorious Care of his future State, at a closer View, was found only occasion'd by his desire of setting his Conscience at

rest; as to what Latitude he might venture to give his Passions" (596). The inner tensions enacted by these expanding and contracting foci, repeatedly underscored by the large (and limiting) passion for money, suggest that the fabric of this contrived self is pulled apart. Indeed, what emerges finally from Manley's characterizing particulars is a picture of a split personality: "In short, he has two Manners, so wonderfully different, that in being thoroughly acquainted with him, you are acquainted with two Persons of as opposite Tempers, as ever you convers'd with" (597).

That this confusing doubleness permeates both the man and his moves is demonstrated by Manley's ordering of narrative events. Her sequential placement of the seduction scene immediately after Elonora's particularly detailed description of Antonio's perplexing psyche exemplifies the deviousness which underlies his decorum. Part of Antonio's stratagem is the game of advance and retreat. In this game, the controlling player must plan ahead and have a hidden "Design," which, as Elonora observes, in her case means snaring her into a love relationship through "the Methods he took to convince me of his," thereby seducing her into a dead-end position where she is emotionally enmeshed and epistemologically amazed:

> I was lost before I reflected, and when I did, my Reflections came too late; for after all he had sworn of inviolable Love, and never-ending Passion, his Design terminated not in Marriage. So closely had he carried his Pretentions, that my Mother and Brother knew nothing of 'em. (597)

The victim's recognition of the trap comes after the fact, when it is too late to think logically because of the deepening trust involved in these successive emotional steps

on her part, merely calculated moves on his part. Antonio's gameplan is to bombard her with professions of love in order to increase her emotional vulnerability and thus soften her resistance to his passionate onslaught on a "grateful" Elonora. This occurs during one of their nightly visits in the garden. Bold but covert, Antonio presses on in duplicity: "He wanted not Cunning to snatch every Opportunity, without their suspicion, of his professing Love for me" (598). His methods reflect the time-honoured torture systems which alternate pleasure with pain to extract anything of worth from the victim: frank adoration switches to "cold and silent" withdrawal, leaving the "Young and Artless" Elonora, who has been "so press'd," weeping uncontrollably in a flower bed.

Manley details the turgid physicality of Antonio's attempt on Elonora's person with seasoned dramatic flair. So convincing is her representation of this combined verbal and physical entanglement that the sense of being entrapped (or even choked in a stranglehold) by both strong arms and strong words renders the tension between "Desire" and "Disappointment" almost palpable:

> I struggled! I deny'd! I sigh'd when I refus'd! nor did those Refusals amount to any more than to endear the Pleasure of granting. Whilst he held me in his eager Arms, wandring o're my Face and Neck, with ten thousand ardent Breathings! Vows of Love and kisses of Delight! he would ask me if we must stop here?—if there was not yet a Wish bebind [sic]?—A leading Desire to more exalted Bliss—Could I not guess at it?—Could I not inform my self by his Extasies, his tumultuous Tremblings?—Amorous, incessant Sighs and Graspings—that there was yet a hurry of Joys, to be possess'd, before a calm of Nature could ensue? (598)

In the initial stages of Antonio's remembered "Caresses," the rapid pace of Elonora's assonant "I" statements about struggling, denying and sighing reflect an open-mouthed

amazement at herself and her own burgeoning desire, which, in the rush of arousal, positions her precariously in the arms of a monster. Needing verbal confirmation of a contractual nature that she is not really in danger, she is held in place for a little longer by the simultaneous vowing and kissing (a persuasive move that feels as good as it sounds), before Antonio's suggestively one-sided series of jerky rhetorical questions enacts the frantic urgency of a hurried coupling in the dark. One can hear Manley's satiric cavalier voice ventriloquising this young "Spark's" passionate entreaty with sardonic delight in the stammering alliterative plosives of "tumultuous Tremblings" and the febrile sibilance of his "Amorous incessant Sighs and Graspings." As a commentary on the octopus-like impulses of physical passion this points up the absurd illogicality of the seducer's argument just as surely as it demonstrates his sexual energy.

When Elonora haplessly mentions "that informing Word" marriage and her would-be lover's desires are instantly "damp'd" causing him to grow cold and silent, release her "Body from his Embraces," fold his arms and walk "off in Musings and with Sighs," the distinction between desire and disappointment becomes clear but the young woman is thoroughly confused (599). She begins to weep, trapped again in a flurry of conflicting emotions and mixed perceptions, tortured by uncertainty:

> I sat down upon a Border of Flowers and fell a weeping, convinc'd of his Villany and Ingratitude. But confirm'd in my own Dotage, since even his Crime could not cure my Passion. I was pain'd! I was tormented! I was sorry! but could not be indifferent. I was angry with his Sin, but not with him. After a number of Tears, Sighs and Sobs succeeded! my Heart heav'd and was oppress'd ev'n to bursting! crying was no Relief! Grief rose to choak me! I wanted Breath! I was

> expiring in disappointed Agonies, while the Barbarian walk'd silent by me, in a profound Resuery [sic]. (599)

This hyperbolic display of antagonistic feeling expressed in disparate images (sad, angry, suspicious, doting, oppressed, bursting, choking, sighing) reveals Elonora stretched on the engine of misplaced affection and faulty thinking: when she can convince herself that she is "angry with his Sin, but not with him," her logic is clearly as disordered as her emotions. Rather than detracting from the idea of Elonora's unfortunate entrapment as one might expect, Manley's ironic amusement at this folie à deux—the girl sitting grief-stricken upon the flower bed, a parody of the romance heroine, the spoiled second son cast as "the Barbarian," sulking silently by—effectively illustrates the nature of the trap in which Elonora is caught. For, clearly, no woman of the world would be taken in as Elonora is and left in this position of confused artlessness; and the equation here, as with Clodius, is a problem of trust and understanding set against mistrust and misunderstanding.

While Manley's satire is arguing for good judgement on the part of women no less than men, she is also sufficiently attuned to the young woman's actual predicament to demonstrate a particular kind of snare which shows that the penalty for being "unthinking" and "without Design" like Clodius, or "unwary" and "Innocent" like Elonora is exacted from women in a distinctly sexual way. The emergent epistemological trap suggests that those "cunning" like Antonio, or the "impious," "Artful" Cicero, whose judgement is so clear, so piercing, and so strong, that it seldom ever deceiv'd him" (II 444) speak a different language from that of virtuous people—one inaccessible, or meaningless to the other. Like Charlot, Louisa,

Zara and others, young inexperienced women such as Elonora, Manley suggests, are socialized to believe the emotional force of words, while not comprehending the tricky gamefulness of a language that is configured for the purposes of seduction (generally meaning ruin for women). But, ironically, it is through Clodius's ruinous experience that the key to Manley's argument about seductive traps emerges. Unlike unhinged Zara, unwary Elonora, or unthinking Clodius, who "imagin'd [Thais] Charming, and from thence doated upon the Idol his Fancy had rais'd" (II 453), those who avoid doting on the imagined charms of others manage their lives better, Manley indicates. Janet Todd observes of Manley's novels that "the most successful survivors are those who have learned that they are essentially alone" and her perception is well-founded (1989 91). For Manley demonstrates that independent people fare better in life because they do not allow a romantic imagination to get the better of them by obscuring their judgement and creating virtues or "Beauties" where there are none (I 608). Although Antonio's ploys are transparently obvious even in Elonora's focalized hindsight or from the reader's satirically filtered perspective, the implication all this carries of Elonora's simplemindedness (like Clodius's potentially cloddish role suggested by his quasi-stock name in the Thais episode) is countered by the recurrent opposition between Antonio's artfulness and Elonora's guilelessness, combined with Manley's copious particularising of the young woman's increasing misfortune and isolation in a game where the rules repeatedly change in the seducer's favour.

To some extent, the problem is that like all Young and Artless people, Elonora wants to believe the world is fathomable, is filled with recognisable "Tenderness" and

"all that cou'd be moral, indearing and plain" (593, 594), and operates on familiar terms of artlessness. Thus wanting to believe in Antonio's discourse as a measure of the true man who offers loving tenderness, and then wanting to escape various other entanglements that result from this central trammel, Elonora is over-persuaded time after time, seduced into numerous snares (discursive, spatial, and monetary) with increasingly catastrophic results for her. Although she acknowledges the root of the problem in her willingness to believe Antonio ("We readily believe what we desire; I was appeas'd and grew calm, nay tender to the Monster" [600]), thus outlining the link between seduction and desire for both narrator and narratee, seducer and seduced, Elonora still allows Antonio to tell one of several persuasive stories and continue the process of attempted corruption, while she listens "with all the Innocence of virtuous Ignorance" (600).

Antonio's discourse points up the disparity between his emotional listener's virtuous ignorance and his own cynical logic. A caricature of Whig philosophy, the language of his carefully poised argument is eminently logical, so seemingly balanced a view of life, in fact, that he can recommend the reading of other equally urbane discourse to corroborate his modern views on marriage: "If you look into the Opinion of La Bruyere (one of the greatest of the Moderns) he will tell you, That it is sometimes convenient, but never delightful," he advises his unlettered pupil with the smooth, epigrammatic delivery of a practised, but faulty, rhetorician. His error here is to substitute the name of La Bruyère for La Rochefoucault's particular brand of cynicism. Antonio goes on to expound the value of "Discretion" (a euphemistic

translation of adultery) as a means of having his way, which he also euphemistically glosses as "Devotion" (601). Marry "the old Baron" and Antonio "shall always be at your Devotion": the plan is materially simple. The argument is simply rational:

> A little Discretion will give us what means of Happiness we can desire. Thus will you at once be establish'd and gratify'd; whereas in marrying me, what must ensue but Misery? Can Love, do you think, subsist in the midst of Want? (601)

But Antonio's rational rhetoric is undermined by the devalued meanings of discretion and happiness (which really signify their antitheses), combined with the weighted economy of "means" (which implies methods, calculations and cheapness). In the mouth of this schemer, any solid appeal to reason falters on the shifting import of the passive verbal constructions "establish'd and gratify'd," yoked together in a sinister inversion of meaning which undoes their pleasurable domestic associations, signalling instead what will be done to Elonora in her establishment (or entrapment) as a mistress entirely for his gratification.

The picture Antonio paints of marriage again undoes the seeming rationality of his argument, for it is unreasonable at best, misogynistic at least, and flawed by any reckoning. In cataloguing the progress of woman in marriage (a pre-Hogarthian study in squalor), this rake ironically reveals his own inherent Nastiness in a graphic misrepresentation of poorer women with children as ugly and dirty:

> That nice Care, and thorough Cleanliness of Person, be exchang'd for Neglect and Nastiness; for how can it be otherwise to the Poor? I shall find (with all my love) but little Inclination to doat upon Sluttishness and Filth! Women indeed, whose Fondness takes away their use of Reason, or supplies the want of it, may not be so easily disgusted; they can more boldly endure the Absence of all things, but of the Man they Love. (601-2)

Off-putting by any honest standards, this scurrilous catalogue of women's weakness which makes them out to be, among other more unsavoury things, unreasonable or foolish, is pointedly followed by a carefully turned demonstration of the rhetorician's scrupulous control over a language which he has just been using to express the uncontrollably disgusting. In the ironic frisson attached to the possibility that "a Wife so Circumstanc'd" may force him to become "Slavish" or "Worldly" or even "Wicked," Antonio's hyperbole makes way for a polished return to the reasonable tone of sage advice:

> Therefore, my Dear, consider wisely with your self, how ruinous to both will such an Union be: Nor in the least conclude, because my Reason abounds, that my Inclinations are not tender, or my Passion for you small!

In attempting to convince his prey that she is responsible for a sensibly discreet outcome, Antonio's amoral logic and phoney homage to Reason reasserts itself in the conclusion to a speech regarded by Elonora (with ironic insight) as a "long and wise Harangue" which seems to her "unanswerable" (602).

Unanswerable or not, the point is that Elonora listens to her seducer's narratives, whether he presents a cautionary tale about the horrors of marital discord brought on by poverty, or the poverty brought on by his own missed opportunities in the marriage market—as he proceeds to do in his next set of "Passages" (602). Recounting his loss of the "rich Widow Lamira" who is snatched from under Antonio's nose (the bed still warm from his "irresolute" presence), then taken for "Thousands" by the Chevalier ("who was wiser than myself, and found her large Possessions extreamly convenient for him"), Antonio primes Elonora for her future

fate with a tale constructed entirely around duplicity, vulgarity, greed and entrapment (607,608). The effect on his young listener is confusion: "confounded at the Boldness he took in making me such dishonourable Proposals," Elonora is aware that although she perceives the pitfalls ("tho' my Eyes were not shut upon his Faults") she is still caught in a web of physical attraction. Wishing "to hate him," she still sees "his Beauties," and feels powerless to extricate herself (608). Her beloved brother, Don Juan (another of Manley's ironic reversals alluding to the infamous seducer's usual victory over the victim's protector in a duel), appears in the garden, offers to help her escape from the "Ill-natur'd" Antonio's clutches and arranges to send her to town with her mother. This "Darling Brother" is forthwith run "through the body" by Antonio in a duel, the "so dear, so tender, so moderate" Don Juan, himself caught in the honour trap because he cannot bear to have Elonora "revil'd like a base Woman" (613).

From this juncture in the narrative, Elonora is locked into a dire game of increasing isolation and dispossession which paradoxically results from the "too great Tenderness" she and her brother share: "All my Misfortunes took their Aera from his Death," she announces in recognition of the subsequent loss of her mother (who dies of a broken heart), her home (the youngest brother lacking in Don Juan's "Tenderness" sends her packing), what little money she has ("incourag'd" in her Aunt's house to become "one of the Gamesters"), and ultimately her safety, when the Aunt's entire household conspires to sell her body to the Count in payment of a gambling debt (613,617). In the meantime, while Elonora is wooed by the Count

who "pretended to fall in love" with her (and from whose lecherous grasp Astrea, Virtue, and Intelligence rescue her), she becomes lost in the confusing pull of antagonistic feelings:

> As to my part, I had Honour! Don Juan! my Mother! and Antonio! in my Head; which all together, produc'd such a medly of thinking, that left but little room for the Count to mingle advantageously with that Miscellanea, which intirely took up the Thought and Sentiments of my Soul" (618).

Still trapped by her emotions, Elonora is engaged in an incessant inner battle against the intruding attachment to her brother's murderer. Her psychomachia is a wearing round of "hourly" denials, refusing him her "Esteem, at the same moment when I could not wean my self of my Love" (619). Yet, even as she approaches release from this mental snare, "with daily Promises of getting free, even from that," Antonio manoeuvres his way back into her life in a most unexpected move: he appears one day out of the blue, causes her blood to curdle, berates her, wooes her, marries her Aunt and resumes his pursuit of Elonora in quick succession. Having succeeded so astonishingly in persuading the Aunt, Antonio returns to the game of seducing Elonora with renewed vigour:

> The Amour went on so successfully, that in less than a Month's time, they were marry'd! and my new Uncle as artificial as you can imagine, wore the Appearance of an extraordinary happy Husband. 'Till his first Ardors beginning to abate, he renewed those he had for me, with that impetuosity, that I cannot describe; he assur'd me with ten thousand

> Oaths, that his only View in marrying with my Aunt, was to have an Opportunity of being in the same House with me. (624-625)

Again, in the midst of a rhetorical copia that even the narrator reflexively stresses "grows already too long" (624), Manley indicates the centrality of discursive power in shaping experience. Underlying the assumed mantle of fake uxoriousness, achieved largely through the language of "Conquest" (621), the excessive force of Antonio's assurance "with ten thousand Oaths" enacts a vicious intent behind his desire to persuade and hold his 'neice' through artifice or stratagem, firmly in check.

Through battlefield imagery and tropes of military strategy, Manley thus emphasizes Elonora's position in an endgame which she cannot win. She is surrounded by mean opponents who are morally weak but strategically strong : "See how I was invaded! The Count from without, my Uncle within! I had nothing but sollicitations to Ruin and Dishonour" (625). As the pace quickens, the sense of the embattled novice with little to gain but much to lose is heightened by more military metaphors, Elonora observing rather woefully, "my Virtue was apprehensive of the potent Invader," and "he ever got the better of me at Argument; so that I declin'd the Field, and fought my Safety by Flight and Retreat" (626). Enlisting the support of other mercenary campaigners from the household (an "old reverend Gentlewoman" with a "subtle contriving Head"), Antonio redoubles his efforts to debauch, devalue and thus snare a deflowered Elonora, who, after being sold to the Count for four thousand crowns' worth of gambling debts, will have a net worth herself of zero on the marriage market. Antonio's reaction to the news of the transaction is expressed in a violent combination of battle and hunting images:

> Don Antonio did not fail to enquire how she had succeeded; which when she had told him, speaking of the Count, Let him have her, cryd he, since he is such a Fool. He will make my Work the easier, he may buy her Person, but I am assur'd of her Heart: I'm not so nice in Precedency, provided I but have her, No matter, whether I am First or Second; let him combat (and, if he can, overcome) that gigantick Monster, Honour. I love lazy Pleasures, and shall be well pleas'd to come into the Quarry without the Fatigue of the Chace. (633)

The swaggering villainy of this greedy figure recalls the antics of Aphra Behn's Sir Cautious Fulbank in The Lucky Chance, who gambles with his wife's lover, using her as stakes. Antonio's plan, however, to lure Elonora to the deserted gardens of the Tuilleries has a darker side, emphasized by the images of the hunted quarry, cornered just before death; for what is being so enthusiastically engineered by the players in this game of bitterly "lazy Pleasures" is the rape of a sixteen-year-old girl. When Manley shows Elonora crying out for understanding to Intelligence and the goddesses, the trap in which this human quarry finds herself is traced in a series of hostile figures, who represent a spatial enactment of the threat posed to society by marginalising and isolating some people in the form of useable commodities.

> Base Antonio! ingrateful Emilia! brutish Count! they've all conspir'd to my Ruin. Ah! what Retreat have I? Where in this bad World shall I find a Protection for my unwary Innocence? My Brother's Family averse! my Aunt's House dangerous! Don Antonio is implacable and resolute! I will never again return to a Place which he dishonours. Oh advise! assist me! Tell me of a Sanctuary! Is there any such a Receptacle, for the Poor, the Innocent, the much unhappy Elonora? (640)

In Elonora's histrionic speech, the accusatory vocatives intercut with frantic questions express not only her panic but also the confusion of the liminal space in which she finds herself. Bespeaking excessive emotion, the melodramatic gasps (at one level associated with the pathetic heroine) enact the terror of an unwary innocent who finds

herself caught in a threatening space—perhaps a "Gin to catch unwary Fools" (II 450). Elonora's flustered incredulity suggests that she is overwhelmed by the brutish actuality of others, while she herself is lost in a "bad World," configured as dangerous places or traps. In this impasse, suffering a kind of death, she neither knows who she is or what to do.

Unlike Clarissa, Manley's potential rape victim does find sanctuary in a safe place; she is taken up by the enchanted imaginary circle of female presences. Games of fictionality aside, what Manley and her readers understand from all this is that when the Elonoras who are trapped by life's circumstances cry out for sanctuary, they cannot usually count on the caring intercession of female goddesses. But the possibility remains, Manley implies, that in life as in fiction, they may discover the "Protection" of a magnanimous mentor, a "Graceful Empress; whose Noble Breast will certainly compassionate your Youth, Beauty and Distress" (641). No longer isolated or entrapped by sexual politics, but welcomed, like Elonora, into a caring circle they may be (no shrinking violets) "conspicuous," "reverenc'd," "valu'd," and able to come out of hiding. Also "dear to the Empress for a thousand Vertues, so much of Kindred to her own!" they, like Elonora, may be accepted as women in a community of peers: "She will receive you into the Houshold, where you shall shine as in your proper Sphere" (641). Although the idea of a woman's proper sphere has since appeared in more restricted topoi (Patmore's angel in the house hovers ghostly over a later age), the suggestion offered by Manley's shining image is that in the

creative energy of a safe space, freed from webs of treacherous desire, women can be visible and productively linked by the interwoven threads of kindred understanding.

NOTES

* Although the accepted term is ménage à trois, the situation seemed to call for a slightly modified phrase in recognition of Thais's repeated déménagement, "pulling down the Beds and Furniture" at a moment's notice, to avoid discovery by a very confused Clodius (II 101). The French idiom for losing one's mind (il démenage—moves out of his head) also fits well here.

1. In Imaginining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England, John Bender describes the liminal space of the old prisons thus: "Incessant complaints by eighteenth-century reformers that the old prisons were confused in tone—sites at once of misery and hilarity, punishment and immorality, death and generation—serve, in this context, to affirm their liminality" (26).

2. Produced on 9th February 1682, a year after Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel I, and a time of great political unrest (the Titus Oates plot and the Monmouth Rebellion), Otway's tragic masterpiece Venice Preserv'd would have been known and talked about when Manley was in her teens.

3. Victor Turner's definitions are based on Arnold van Gennep's Les Rites de Passage (Paris: E Nourry, 1909).

4. Gilbert Highet explains that the writer of burlesque in prose or poetry "may coin a new language, hybridized from dignified Latin and colloquial Italian, called 'macaronic' after the coarse mixed peasant dish" (The Anatomy of Satire, 1962 104).

5. Any parodic echoes of Macbeth's speech (Macbeth V.v.19-28) would also emphasize Cicero's proficiency as a cynical political operator. Although reflecting a similarly evil ruthlessness, Cicero's character itself (unlike Macbeth's) carries no tragic associations. But Manley implies (for her own political, anti-Whig purposes) that his impact on the state could be of tragic proportions, since he controls so many people whose function is to circulate seditious propaganda throughout the nation. "Diligent Cicero," she writes, "held twice five hundred Hands in constant Support and Pay to transcribe whatever Libels should be produc'd and approv'd" (II 450).

6. Discussing narrative gaps, Iser goes into more detail:

> "No tale can be told in its entirety. Indeed it is only through inevitable omissions that a story will gain its dynamism. Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring

> into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in gaps left by the text itself" (1971 285).

Rimmon-Kenan quotes Iser (and others, such as Eco and Perry) on the subject of "hermeneutic" gaps and she points out that the "hermeneutic aspect of reading consists in detecting an enigma (a gap), and searching for clues, forming hypotheses, trying to choose among them and (more often than not) constructing one finalized hypothesis" (Narrative Fiction 1983 128).

7. See Jerry C. Beasley's article in Cecilia Macheski and Mary Anne Schofield (eds), Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815, 1985, 216-36.

8. In Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses (1989), Christopher Simon Sykes discusses the building of Buckingham House at some length. He quotes a long letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury in which Buckingham describes the "spacious" elegance of his house with great pride, the actual letter enacting Manley's name for him—Orgeuil. In this letter, the Duke also outlines the area which is Manley's original for the space where Elonora is entrapped by her would-be rapist: "The avenues to this house are along St. James's Park, through rows of goodly Elms on one hand, and gay flourishing Limes on the other, that for coaches, this for walking; with the Mall lying between them" (63). Pointing out that the foundation stone for Marlborough House was laid on 4 May 1709, Sykes also quotes from Sarah's letter to Sir Christopher Wren to whom she had given the commission: "I mortally hate all Grandeur and Architecture" (70), she wrote but, of course, she chose one of the best architects of the time (perhaps for all time) and was happy to live in the great house for twenty-two (imperious, testy) years.

9. Wilson's note on the term "godgame" (which is, he points out, John Fowles's term) refers to one character being forced by another of superior cunning to "struggle, as within a cognitive trap, to discover the godlike gamewright's hidden rules, (that is to think his way out or to 'play through')" (In Palamedes' Shadow: Explorations in Play, Game, and Narrative Theory, 1990 251). See also John Fowles on this concept in The Aristos: A Self-Portrait in Ideas (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 19.

10. Robert Markley discusses Maskwell's curiously dual function in the play, pointing out that "In focusing on Maskwell, Congreve calls attention to the discrepancies in The Double Dealer between moral and aesthetic standards of judgement" and also that Maskwell's verbal powers of manipulation (demonstrated in "logically impeccable language") show him as the "hero-villain" who "can only be overheard and unmasked, not undone" (Two-Edg'd Weapons 210-11). Manley's Antonio similarly embodies a witty, but nonetheless wicked, control over others through his persuasive rhetoric and recognisably well-bred exterior.

CHAPTER 5

"The Aspiring Shady Groves": Body and Landscape

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> The weight of the "non-said" (non-dit) no doubt affects the mother's body first of all: no signifier can cover it completely, for the signifier is always meaning (sens), communication or structure, whereas a mother-woman is rather a strange "fold" (pli) which turns nature into culture, and the "speaking subject" (le parlant) into biology. Although it affects each woman's body, this heterogeneity, which cannot be subsumed by the signifier, literally explodes with pregnancy—the dividing line between nature and culture—and with the arrival of the child—which frees a woman from uniqueness and gives her a chance, albeit not a certainty, of access to the other, to the ethical.
>
> Julia Kristeva, Stabat Mater

In the Novels series, Manley begins five of her six prose fictions with images of the female body, emphasizing in the opening sentences of Memoirs of Europe, for example, the suggestive links between female creativity, writing and parturition. Dealing reflexively with the painful labours, "Hopes and Fears" entailed in producing "Histories" (such as the one being offered to the reader), Manley chooses a metaphor which presents writing in images that recall the sometimes overwhelmingly powerful, transformative energy of a woman's body. Referring to the comparatively small number of works to survive their authors, she asks, "How many more (like Mushrooms of a Night, or Abortives under the Mother-Pangs) have left their unhappy Parent the Mortification of seeing 'em expire as soon as they began to Be?" (Novels II 1). In the context of the disturbing emotional and physiological ramifications suggested by the word "Mortification,"[1] the natural and psychological dynamic of these images enacts the energy of natural growth in apposition to the painful reality of

death-in-birth, with its doubly mortifying impact on the mother, and typifies Manley's fictional concerns. Such potently evocative maternal imagery demonstrates how much of her writing's own peculiar energy is born out of her depictions of the female: corporeal, natural, sexual, social.

Whereas The Secret History of Queen Zarah emphasizes the adventures of its "treacherous" female protagonist, whose life is "one continued Scene of politick Intrigue" (I 41), figured as a venomous snake, wounding others "with all the Subtilty of the Serpent" (I 259), The New Atalantis features the warmly encircling presence of three expressive female figures—the godesses, Astrea and Virtue, aided by Intelligence, a curiously dual spirit "Lady," both allegorical and actual in the text (I 290)—who frame the multiple narratives which create the body of the text, observing, mediating, and sometimes participating in the action. Astrea's introduction in the first sentence of the first volume, where the goddess is pictured propelled by natural forces, blown "by a little too strong a Propension of one of the Winds that bore her" to the cliffs of the island Atalantis, is immediately followed by her "rapturous Soliloquy" addressing the earth, which is figured as a woman (I 273). The natural generosity of the earth, with its power to delight, comfort, create and nurture, is expressed in images which delineate the female body written into a "Richly endow'd" landscape (I 274):

> All hail thou beautiful Product of the Eternal Mind! How Enchanting are thy Prospects? How Generous is the Earth? How charming her Fruits? How flowing the Waters? How cooling, how limpid the Streams? How Refreshing to the Taste and Limbs of Mortals? How pleasingly they wind to make fruitful the Neighbouring Meads? Those grassy Pastures,

> the aspiring shady Groves, and the whole ample Bosom of the Terrestrial Globe. (I 273)

Although this picture of the earth figured as the maternal female belongs to a familiar tradition stretching back into pagan antiquity, the prevalent images here of liquid nurturing, fruitful generosity, flowing waters, limpid streams and ample bosom are particularly evocative of pregnancy and lactation. In some way these images allude, perhaps, to the Marian visions of the Mater dolorosa, whose milk and tears, both "metaphors of non-language" Kristeva writes, are "signs par excellence" of a figure who came to the West in the eleventh century and became most prevalent in the fourteenth (Kristeva 109).

Yet, passive and contained (by the law of the fathers) as this silently expressive figure is, while the maternal earth holds resonances of a madonna, clearly the females figured in Manley's texts are active counterparts to any representations of passivity. In The New Atalantis, for example, the personifications of Justice and Virtue offer parodic contrasts to the otherworldly icons of the past who, virginal and silent, float disembodied in the allusive space of metafictionality. "Denied any claim to an enunciating subjectivity" in Sidonie Smith's words, "such figures would serve to reinforce, as did the fictive template of the story of Eve, the erasure of real woman's desire and authoritative word" (Smith 39). Opinionated and expressive, the personified virtues in The New Atalantis are quite the opposite of such icons: here Manley's narratives are shaped by instructive female figures, who volubly enunciate and confirm real woman's desire with words of authority. These female figures, who freely cross ontological and generic boundaries, navigating a discursive space that

flows between narrative worlds, shaping and unshaping various subjects with the rhythmic currents of their stories, gesture towards the kind of rhythmic undercurrents of language's semiotic chora that Kristeva sees challenging and transforming the unitary thetic subject. Their sinuously weaving tales lend the novels the open heterogeneity of female forms, pregnant with meaning; theirs is a semiotic which quickens beneath narrative surfaces and pushes beyond immediate textual boundaries.

Astrea and Virtue are supposedly not visible in the sub-lunary narrative world, nor is their language usually available for direct communication with that world; yet, having established the tensions between verbal and non-verbal communication, the spoken, the unspoken, and the unspeakable, these now actively voluble, now thoughtfully philosophical female figures occasionally bulge out of their containing boundaries and push forth into the narrative world. This tendency to engage in ludic volubility, foregrounding female creativity, speech and action, together with the provocative images of landscape and the female bodies which inform them, actually draws the earlier iconographic tradition of containment within the patriarchal law closer to reformulating the ethical tradition by bringing "to the law" as Kristeva puts it "flesh, language, and jouissance" (Kristeva 117).

Manley's thematic emphasis at the close of Astrea's soliloquy to the earth is that the natural power and beauty of this female personification, "Nature," although emanating from the Divine Original, is misappropriated, her "Benefits so Sweet" and "Possessions so Ravishing" misused, and wasted by a corrupt race of man (I 274).

Offered in a series of rhetorical questions asking "to what a Race hast thou deliver'd these Enjoyments?" (I 274), these exclamatory remarks set up a central theme of Manley's satirical writings: the waste or wanton perversion of natural, healthy sexuality for material gain, personal greed or social standing. Inevitably in this unworthy world, where the worthy female figure of Nature is prostituted for gain, the female body is emblematic of change. The earthy and corporeal landscapes in Manley's fiction embody an Augustan fascination for transformational energy, the oxymoronic tensions of pleasure and pain which reveal painful realities beneath pleasurable natural surfaces.

Manley's description of ill-fated love in an aromatic garden and the preceding analysis of love ("'tis a fading sweetness, mix'd with bitter Passions; a lasting Misery, chequer'd with a few momentary Pleasures!" [I 751]) recalls a Restoration relish for poetic oxymorons. The paradoxical spirit of the "Sublime," uniting "Height and Grandeur" with "sudden Falls," made Longinus[2] a favourite classical critic in Manley's day, for in keeping with the poetic enterprise of the age, he supports (as Margaret Anne Doody puts it) "the daring that risks imperfection" (Doody 1985, 19). This sublime spirit informs Dryden's linking "Pleasures" with "Pains of Love" that "be sweeter far" in Tyrannick Love (1670), and Addison's important treatment of the Sublime in Pleasures of the Imagination (written before the full text was printed in The Spectator of 1712) also links pleasure and pain when he quotes lines from Ovid's Metamorphoses.[3] Similarly, Anne Finch (praised for her "Genius" by Manley, who quotes her at length in Atalantis) shows psychological and physical change wrought by

Spleen upon "the feeble Brain" overcome by the Jonquille's "Aromatick Pain" (a phrase appropriated by Pope): both Manley and Finch invest any element of the oxymoronic hypsous with an intimately psycho-sexual twist.[4] With her usual insight, Margaret Anne Doody has examined this Augustan love of sensuous pleasure related to pain, and explains how the "connection of pain and pleasure is most often and most explicitly produced in connection with love and sex" in Early Augustan or Restoration poetry (Doody 1985 171).[5]

Manley's introduction of another female "Form" in the opening passages of Atalantis provides a similarly paradoxical combination of images and implications. "Pensive and Forlorn, a Beautiful Person" arises near to Astrea and calling her "Daughter" runs with open arms to embrace the puzzled goddess (I 274). The allegorical figure, a personification of Virtue, is indeed Astrea's mother, albeit unrecognisable briefly because her "Habit Obsolete and Torn, almost degenerated into Tatters" and dejected air render her "Native Charms, that needed not the help of Art" almost (but not quite) concealed (I 274). In the manner of contemporary poets and prose-writers, Manley delights in showing what lies beneath this tattered, neglected surface. What emerges from her description is an almost Petrarchan, parodic blazon of beauty's best[6] which is neatly undone at the end by the introduction of eighteenth-century concerns with physical transformation and psychological energy:

> But Oh! how despicable her Garments! how neglected her flowing Hair! how languid her formerly animating Eyes! how pale, how withered the Roses of her lovely Cheeks and Lips! how useless her snowy Arms and polish'd Fingers! they hung in a melancholy Decline, and seem'd out of other Employment, but sometimes to support the Head of the dejected

> fair One; her Limbs enervated and supine, wanting of that Energy that should bear her from a Solitude so affrighting. (I 274)

The contrasting colour imagery of the cheeks' "Roses" and limbs' snow-white marble represents woman as statuesque object, divided, like the blazon, into so many separate parts, imprisoned in her solitude of difference; the sense of fragmentation is seen in the participle "exploded" later repeated to demonstrate Virtue's enforced state of exclusion "from Courts and Cities" (I 276). But Manley suggests that differences can be reconciled and this potential prison of "Solitude so affrighting" (which provides a telling motif throughout her texts) can be escaped through love's positive energy (I 274).

When Astrea has come to her senses, and having "known and embraced her lovely Parent," her filial love effects the necessary change, enabling Virtue to reclaim sufficient energy for a long disquisition on the hypocrisy and "Sensual Corruptions" of a loveless age which prizes artifice and ruthless physicality above all (I 274-5). Virtue's catalogue of false appearances fits the Menippean requirement for encyclopaedic definition but as she details her own alienation from "the Lovers of this Age" she also conveys (in tones of maternal mourning) the alienation of the age's lost youth: "the youngest Virgin, and the most ardent Youth, are contented to quote me only as a Name; something Fine, that their Histories indeed make mention of; a thing long since departed, and which at this Day is not to be found among 'em" (I 275). Distinguishing between the caring heart and the outward person, Virtue's speech emphasizes the "Diabolical way of Argument" which separates body from mind or heart, "that Love resides not in the Heart, but in the Face," thus rendering the body a

mere plaything and leaving a socially, psychologically and even biologically ruinous fragmentation (I 275).

To illustrate Virtue's point there follows a miniature allegory depicting a wedding feast where the ignis fatuus of Interest provides "the glare only of a false Light" to the "sacred Ceremony of the Bed" and the unloving pair retire with "the utmost Indifferency" to their "several Chambers" (I 276).[7] Virtue asks Astrea to speculate on the offspring of such a union: "How void of generous Fire, of that sparkling Genius, the product of noble free-born love" (I 276). Working in opposition to the Hobbes-Locke discourse of social contract, these references to "noble free-born love" suggest an imposition of slavery on the female body which—rather than being granted any form of constitutional liberty—is increasingly the object of ownership and the mere "necessary Article" by which means property is transferred from one male heir to the next in this "unloving" socio-economic system presided over by Interest (I 276).[8] The idea of natural nobility appears repeatedly in Manley's writings and here the conflation of natural nobility with freedom and love is underscored by images of energy—fire and light—and nature—trees—working in combination to figure forth a vigorous creativity which stands in direct opposition to the "whole ignoble Train, that fly before the dawn of Knowledge and the sweetness of Science" (I 277). Written into this Menippean anatomy of contemporary social mores is a palimpsestic sub- or pre-text which reiterates the paradisal "Morning of Creation" and the female force of creation, the Great Mother. When Virtue thus reflects, "I no longer (as in the Morning of Creation) have Crowns and Garlands at my disposal,"

she also describes how the earth echoes her sorrows (276). Although such a halcyon time of graceful connection and natural integrity is past, leaving her "to wander, Exploded and Alone" (I 277), Manley's text shows the remaining salvatory links between this abandoned, marginalized female figure and the world of nature:

> Thus may I well (neglected as I am) appear Disconsolate, Abandon'd, flying to the utmost Verge, to bewail my Misfortunes in those solitary Clifts, talking of my Woes to the sonorous Waves, who by the resounding of the Rocks ecchoe [sic] to my Wailings, and sometimes out-beat the remembrance of my Miseries. (I 277)

Separated though she is from the "Commerce of this despicable Race," and relegated to the "utmost Verge," this female figure finds boundaries dissolving in a feminized seascape of natural, sympathetic rhythms and oceanic depths.

Manley's integration of female body and landscape serves not to display the female as object, nor to show woman as the eternal victim, but rather to offer a solution to social injustices which punish women for performing natural functions (such as childbirth) while men go freely without fault. Throughout Manley's texts, nature and body imagery tends rather to point towards an alternative existence of unbounded equality and healthy vigour where natural rhythms are not cut or enclosed. Manley is emphatic that "the Bloom of Life" (I 565) is not for wasting; gardens filled with "a profusion of Sweets," blossoms of "Orange Flowers and Jessamine," where the waters of a canal are mirrored in the "rich Meanders" of a woman's bosom (I 759-760) provide implicit comment on the sour reality of a post-lapsarian world which offers little or no option of unpunished sexuality for women in a joyfully female space.

Based on the story of Frances Scudamore, Diana de Bedamore's story of sexual betrayal builds to a climactic scene in a fragrant, blooming garden where this "profusion of Sweets" figures forth the orgasmic delights she and her lover enjoy in a compelling state of nature.

> It was the Evening of an excessive hot Day, she got into a shade of Orange Flowers and Jessamine, the Blossoms that were fallen cover'd all beneath with a profusion of Sweets. A Canal run by, which made that retreat delightful as 'twas fragrant. Diana, full of the uneasiness of Mind that Love occasion'd, threw herself under the pleasing Canopy, apprehensive of no Acteon to invade with forbidden Curiosity, her as numerous perfect Beauties, as had the Goddess. Supinely laid on that repose of Sweets, the dazzling Lustre of her Bosom stood reveal'd, her polish'd Limbs all careless and extended, show'd the Artful Work of Nature. (I 760)

In this passage, Manley returns to the mind-body-landscape connection which she establishes earlier in the opening lines of Atalantis. Clearly, the descriptions of Diana's body, showing "the Artful Work of Nature," and the garden with its suggestively female flowered "retreat delightful as 'twas fragrant" present woman and garden as one, united in "numerous perfect beauties" with the inherent ability of the pagan godess to transform reality and restore the feminine principle to power (as Diana's power fixes Acteon). Yet, despite Diana de Bedamore's apparent identification with the garden, the emphasis in this episode seems to me to be less on the passively decorative feminine than on the earthily active female possibilities offered by an edenic natural order—a utopian crux, perhaps. Although, as both April London and Rosalind Ballaster indicate, the scene locates the audience—both outside and inside the text (vide Astrea and companions)—in the position of "voyeuristic" observers,[9] and Diana, thus, as passive object, what emerges in Manley's argument

(framing the narrative) is that Diana, in freely expressing her natural self, is embodying the vital forces of an unthinking (therefore uncontrived) "Love and Nature" combined, which identifies her with the powerful natural forces of the earth:

> Her Person lovely, as the most lovely Imagination could form it. The darting Lustre of her Eyes, were like the Lightnings Flash, so awful and so piercing. But having cast the dazzling Death, they roul'd into a rest from Fire, and gave the Gazers an Alternative of pleasing Pain, with leave to wonder at their various Beauty, for Languishments would take their turn, and show the Mine of Love within. (I 749)

In this characterization of Diana through her peculiarly vivacious appearance, the oxymoronic images of dazzling death and pleasing pain combine with the other elemental images to suggest a natural treasury of the senses, representing Diana (somewhat sardonically) as the force of love or passion personified.

Manley emphasizes Diana's willing participation in this "Rapture," exploring the moment when her social duty ("the feeble sense she had of Virtue") is overcome by a natural force that precludes due consideration or thinking. When Diana is lulled by love's poison her unthinking inaction suggests again paradoxically both the stillness of death (a pun on orgasmic response) and (in the classical model of Cupid's poison dart) the possible world of pagan antiquity when female power was a significant part of mythic consciousness:

> Whilst Diana, lull'd by the enchanting Poison Love had diffus'd throughout her form, lay still, and charm'd as he!—she thought no more!—she cou'd not think!—Let Love and Nature plead the weighty cause!—let them excuse the beauteous Frailty!—Diana was become a Votary to Venus!—obedient to the dictates of the Goddess! (I 760-761)

Within the obvious hyperbole of her satire on individual human weakness (specifically the individual character of Diana's 'original' Frances Scudamore), Manley alludes

obliquely to the missing feminine principle that underlies her own plea in "the weighty cause" of social reform towards a natural mean or balance that will allow a woman to be "charm'd as he" and prevent the injustice Astrea comments on at the close of the episode when "Poor Madam de Bedamore" is forced to "shut up her self in that Magnificent House that had been destin'd the Seat of her Pleasures" reinstated in propriety and property, but nonetheless immured (as Mary Wollstonecraft was still complaining nearly a century later), "groping in the dark" (Wollstonecraft 170).

> Astrea.] I don't find Lady Intelligence, that in this World of yours, Vice is an Obstacle to Advancement. Cou'd any Person be more ingrateful than the Baron! Poor Madam de Bedamore met the Reward of her Indiscretion, and was sufficiently punish'd by her Lover's Ingratitude, and her Lord's Indulgence; for to a Breast, sensible as hers seems to have been of Benefits, they wound and disarm more than the severest Reproaches! she is lost and forgotten by her Crime! But see Roderiguez, Prosperous and Flourishing with his! How can this unequal Distribution be accounted for? (I 771)

Despite the obvious irony of Justice's comments on Diana de Bedamore's sensitive "Breast" being wounded or disarmed by the punishment of "her Lord's Indulgence," the point that Manley makes in these framing remarks is that the woman is effectively punished when she "no longer convers'd Abroad," and is "lost and forgotten by her Crime!" whereas the man, far from being punished, "Prosperous and Flourishing with his!" is rewarded by an unequal society. Within Astrea's concluding commentary, Manley makes her own plea for a new accounting and movement away from "this unequal Distribution" which punishes the "noble free-born" expression of female sexual power existing in a state (albeit edenic) of nature.

Manley's text is carefully organized to illustrate the psychological and physical affirmations that this is indeed a state of nature, albeit morally flawed by the adulterous status of their union. Taken in the context of Virtue's framing lament at the outset of Atalantis for the loss of "noble free-born love" which produces "generous Fire" and "sparkling Genius," (I 276) and the repeated references in the text to the "forc'd" (I 750) unnatural "Conveniency" (I 752) of arranged marriage, this passage suggests that although Diana's sexuality is naturally sanctioned, nature has ultimately entrapped her and she, like the land, is then controlled by the hand of man, shut up in a house "fitted to the Beauty of her it was to enclose" (I 752). Beyond April London's tightly argued analysis of it and other eighteenth-century metonymic gardens, Manley's heavily seductive garden scene seems less an "emphasis on her passivity and his aggression" (concluding that "Roderiquez has done no more than assert a natural territorial imperative") than a satiric demonstration that healthy female sexuality is subverted by a sick social structure, the engine which both contains and twists natural forms, extinguishing vital energy.

All this is not to say that Manley's texts never satirize women: Queen Zarah, a sustained anatomy of a woman whose principles are those of the male politician, a "perfect Machiavel" (I 57), is an obvious example of Manley's wide-ranging satirical pen. But when women in her texts are anatomized or condemned for their actions it is because they undermine or destroy others and in so doing feed the male political machine and bolster the patriarchal economy. One way to undo the patriarchal economy is to express female sexuality and intelligence through speech, such as the

volubility of Manley's figure Intelligence, who represents female knowing in both the sexual and informational senses. Speaking out counteracts long-held views that associate women's bodies with their profligate speech, such as the Renaissance belief that (in Ann Rosalind Jones's words) "a woman's accessibility to the social world beyond the household through speech was seen as intimately connected to the scandalous openness of her body" (Jones 1986 76).[10] Telling stories also exposes what Susan Hardy Aiken calls the "vulnerability of the patriarchal economy, grounded in the subjection of woman's body, will, and discourse as it is grounded in the division of land, the setting up of boundaries and the establishment of (masculine) signs, both topographical and linguistic" (Aiken 1984 168).[11]

When Intelligence speaks out in the opening pages of Atalantis II it is to "get what Information I can of that new Adventure before us" (I 539). While the loftier "Eminences" remain poised in their cerebral musings about "Anarchy," "TRUTH," and "Religion" somewhere far above gritty actuality, "declaiming a Length beyond my Understanding," the adventure she is about to discover, or uncover, promises to be a "very uncommon one" (539). Bringing the goddesses (both figuratively and actually) down to earth into the grip of a visibly earthy drama, this adventure "before us" into which Intelligence draws them (and us) with an enticing question, provides a multilayered commentary on such issues as boundaries and the female body, will and discourse.

> What can that Coach of Hire do here at this Hour of the Night? 'Tis very unusual to take the Air by Moon-Light, especially in so remote a Place. It stops under those large Trees before us, let us draw nearer, we shall make some Discovery. O Fortune! what can this Adventure mean?

> The Driver is the Prince de Majorca himself: There's the Order of the Golden-Fleece upon his Cloak, the King of Spain bestow'd it upon him: I know his Face and Air perfectly well. He spreads his Cloak upon the Root of the Trees. See! he takes a Lady from the Coach into his Arms and lays her gently upon it; she groans in a trembling manner. I beg your Divinities to tell me if I am invisible, that I may fearlessly draw near and observe the Conclusion of this Affair. (I 539)

Intelligence's fearless observations form a discursive bridge which is both structural and ontological. Her words link the framing philosophical declamations of the two deities, Astrea and Virtue, with the activities they witness on earth through the informative presence of Intelligence (who could equally well be called Gossip).[12] Intelligence, the loquacious link between Astrea's more lofty lunar realms and the worldly follies witnessed by the three, often counters the intellectual musings of the two Eminences with her own mundane bluster, creating a humorously ironic tension between the ideas of Philosophy and Actuality. Intelligence may be lower in the hierarchy but she recognizes her essential role in the enterprise, for without her careful record of mortal deeds nothing remains but empty Empyrean words—a realization that Manley consciously plays with throughout the text.

Intelligence begins the passage and begins the narrative of the second volume with a reflexive comment on the disparity between her method and the goddess's high idealistic purposes. Her direct speech enacts the characteristics of a busybody, hurrying off in an unseemly way to find out more (in contrast to the goddess's polite philosophising): the passage starts and ends with the urgent sense of needing to know more, to discover the "Adventure" and "Affair" (7). In ironic opposition to this familiar human bustle and loquacity is the suspense-ridden strangeness of the scene

she describes: everything is in place but nothing immediately fits. Intelligence lists the familiar aspects of the scene—trees, moonlight, coach—in a series of rhetorical questions that highlight the puzzling disconnectedness and suggest the questioning receptivity or willingness to deduce that heralds narrative entrapment scenes (where stories—such as Iago's to Othello—are used to entrap the listener in some way). Although this is not, as it turns out, such a scene, it introduces the story of Harriat, who, before her unwanted pregnancy, has herself entrapped and ruined others (by threatening to tell tales) with a vicious tenacity which is here matched by an equally ferocious determination to keep her painful secret and avoid ruining her own fame.

Intelligence's questions float outside the adventure in a suggestive limbo which in itself opens up problems of narrative voice. The paratactic structure of the passage, with layered images and layered questions, suggests the strangely shifting possibilities behind the familiar signs; despite the closeness of the scene, an intellectual distance opens up. If Menippean satire is writ large in all this, then so too is an epistemological urge for true knowing.

Underneath the catalogue of details a definite anagogical pattern emerges: the coach, the moonlight, the remote place, the trees, the prince, the insignia, the cloak, all work together to demonstrate hypocrisy. When the layers are peeled away like onion skins, a visceral truth emerges which undermines any pastoral, romantic or philosophical resonances. While the natural beauty of this earthly place is strangely twisted into something other, the context of Virtue's earlier invocation to a pre-lapsarian world of "generous Love" becomes clear. Intelligence, though, is too busy

worrying about the news, the novelty, to grasp the full human or social impact of the scene before her. Manley emphasizes this cognitive hiatus when the lady's trembling groans are juxtaposed with Intelligence's fretting about invisibility. This too is ironic, for the lady herself wishes invisibility—annihilation—in this birth so overwhelmingly that she later pleads for death rather than lose her reputation.

The whole episode is a heavily ironic comment on a fallen society, where meanings collapse into outer surfaces of things and things themselves lose or change meaning. The coach, ostensibly out for a drive to take the air, opens to reveal a lady gasping in extremis; the insignia of honour is removed to reveal a dishonourable wastrel; the lordly cloak serves as a meagre lying-in sheet over the tree roots which themselves are altered from their natural function of supporting and nourishing to become a painful "Rack of Nature"; the tranquil gleam of a moonlit night translates into the hectic, covert business of Mrs. Nightwork, the midwife, who must deliver the illegitimate issue of these hitherto glittering socialites under cover of darkness, for the sake of those who blindly value fame above human life.

The Lady suffers "Agonies," trapped in this corporeal engine on the brink of life and death, worrying that her "unfortunate Body" will become a "Sepulcher" and a damaging yet lifeless sign of her fall where she "shall be wounded even after Death," as she laments "ah what Repository for my ador'd Reputation" (I 540). She, however, along with her Reputation, is restored to life by the "very Instructive, very Talkative, and very Knowing" female agency of Mrs. Nightwork (550). While the Lady's painful encounter with the "Rack of Nature" has a successful outcome in the

birth of a living (yet "Poor Baby") boy (548), followed by her efficiently clandestine return to society (whisked back to the city by coach), Manley has already established a context of physical ruin which far outweighs any attempt at retaining "Reputation" and shows that others are not so fortunate. Mrs. Nightwork's experience "upwards of twenty Years" (543) rescues women from the often deadly emotional and physical "Mortification" resulting from libidinous freedom, the "Foibles of the Fair" (550), but this helpful female agency is not present in the story of Zara (Sarah Stout) which occurs immediately prior to the moonlit childbirth scene. Zara, a young Quaker woman, is also pictured in a moonlit landscape but hers is a scene of emotional undoing, for she is unravelled to the point of suicide at the conclusion of a "troublesome Amour" with a scheming politician (based on Spencer Cowper, the younger son of a prominent Whig family).[13] For Zara, unlike the Lady Harriat, there is no helpful female agency to rescue her from the kind of faulty religious thinking (in Manley's view a "wrong Principle" dangerously close to seditious dissent) that allows her to believe in cohabitation as proof of marriage in defiance of both established church and social "Laws" (I 514, 513).

Manley sums up the tale of Zara in a closing comment that apparently situates the moral of the story in Zara's "Punishment" for her adulterous attachment:

> But we cannot see a swifter instance of Divine Vengeance, than in the Punishment that here on Earth befell Zara, for bestowing her guilty Affections upon a Person marry'd to another. (516)

Yet this declaration of the Awful Warning type appears as an afterthought in the text where Manley's sustained emphasis in this and its companion episode, forming the

history of two unscrupulous brothers "renown'd for their Ascendency over the Ladies," is on the brothers' perfidy as proof of the entire Volpone (Cowper) family's corruption: "In their Tongues there is such Delusion, that 'tis impossible for any Women they attempt, not to be inchanted and undone by 'em" (517). While the elder brother, Hernando Volpone, leans towards polygamy and has almost incestuously seduced his young ward Louisa under his wife's nose, his brother, Mosco Volpone, has grown tired of the wealthy young Zara, whose main fault is that her response (in the manner of the very young but also reflecting the "wrong" thinking of her dissenting sect) approaches an indiscreetly "transporting height" (504) so that she inconveniently transgresses the boundaries of propriety and "seem'd rather to be the Aggressor" (499).

Dolores Duff points out that Manley's interest in the story was "threefold": the political purpose of denigrating the Whigs; the focus on religious problems, specifically the perils of dissent; and the "large opportunity once more for Delia to examine the psychological workings of character, the nature of passion, and the effects of convention upon personality" (Duff 1965 322). While I agree with Duff that Manley "diluted and limited her treatment" of the affair, my reading differs in that this dilution is not necessarily (as Duff says) "to the detriment of the story" (Duff 327). Clearly Manley's twisting of the Quaker position for her own political reasons is entirely suspect historically (and even, one might argue, ethically), but so far as her place in the development of the novel is concerned, I would argue that rather than "lessening the interest of the tale as she increased the hectic quality of Sarah's

character and the malevolent nature of Quaker influence upon the girl's personality," Manley's convincing focus on Zara's psychological disintegration is important precisely for the "political hues" of a psycho-sexual nature, which, far from obscuring (as Duff contends) the story's "main interest," actually create interest, through Manley's examination of Zara's breakdown, to give the story a different kind of psychological significance (Duff 327).

Manley frames the two episodes with pointed comment on these two sons of Volpone "the elder," who is characterised as a perverted "old Debauchee, given to irregular Pleasures, not such as the laws of Nature seem to dictate" (485). The story allows Manley to explore religious, social, philosophical, and political issues, particularly to undermine the Whig cause with her indications that these men, although part of the established power structure, have something unnatural or "irregular" in their characters which tends to make them deviate from traditional or normal patterns of behaviour, but nevertheless leaves their political progress unimpeded. For Manley's political purposes, this is satirically slanted towards a comparison with the suffering endured by their female victims, both of whom die "Heart-broke" at the "Inconstancy," each "a Martyr of that Passion to which she had been devoted"; for while Zara dies young, Louisa dies diseased "nor can she be call'd much more happy than Zara; for tho' she did not survive her Lovers [sic] Kindness, she suffer'd by it" (516-517).

> These two Brothers, renown'd for their Ascendency over the Ladies, have this in their Character, That they only desire to be heard: In their Tongues there is such Delusion, that 'tis impossible for any Women they attempt, not to be inchanted [sic] and undone by 'em. (517)

Manley emphasizes Mosco Volpone's ability to shape reality through his use of words, enchanting and undoing the self of others, but she also indicates that this combines with Zara's muddled thinking (engendered by the "forbidding Crew of Sectaries" in her background) to create a world of bewildering "Delusion" in which Zara foolishly believes she has the power to pass over impassable boundaries. Into this deluded space Mosco briefly invites Zara only to profit economically from her "Fortune" and leave her predictably "inchanted and undone," in a state of suicidal despair.

Mosco's marriage to his father's mistress has created faction in the family, for his mother "never forgave him his Marriage with her" (501). Underscoring the actuality that the practical effect of this is to create a "narrower sphere" economically for Mosco than that enjoyed by his brother, Mosco's interest in Zara is presented obliquely in the language of commerce as something that is not unprofitable: "it would be no disadvantage to him to have the command of Zara's" (502). Manley's focalization of Mosco's interests in this negative construction points to his calculating distance from an unworldly client who, by contrast, is shown to be not only manipulated by his seizure of her fortune but also gripped by the malady of obsessional passion: "The young Creature took a fatal Passion for him" (502). Signifying the disease of corruption which has taken hold of the private self no less than the body politic, the inscription of this "fatal Passion" is seen throughout Zara's body in the language of disordered emotion that transforms her so "that all the World might read in her Face the disorders of her Soul" (502). Ironically, this apparent

disorder is interpreted by Mosco's wife as an illness worthy of compassionate love: "she believ'd her sick of a Distemper she cou'd not help" and therefore does not "love her any the less for it" (502). This picture of the older woman's loving acceptance of her youthful betrayer adds a poignant twist to an already involved tale of intrigue and concupiscence.

Manley hints at the potential for supportive relationships among the women here, as elsewhere in her writings, while at the same time indicating the pull away from such female support systems in the unnaturally divisive structures of a patriarchal political economy. In this episode, which is announced as the story of the powerful Volpone's "two Sons" (485) and summed up as the history of "These two Brothers" (517), the containing structure of a story about sons and brothers holds within its boundaries the even more affective but unannounced tale of mothers, daughters, wives and female friends—perhaps thus enacting in some sense the hidden meanings of female experience, such as that implied by Kristeva's observations on the "weight of the 'non-said' (non-dit)" enfolded in the woman's body (Kristeva 109). This outer, framing story of two brothers who effectively exploit the "Interest" of unwitting (but willing) female pawns thus enfolds the simultaneously contained tales of the two younger women whose private shame remains (almost) unannounced in the jealously guarded fame of the brothers' public lives. The involved form here mirrors the enfolded contents. These stories of female victimization ostensibly rest hidden in a narrative that proclaims its androcentric, political purpose; but it effectively offers what Manley shows to be a feminine voice buried deep within the text

(autobiographical in its resonances of Manley's own ruinous experience with her bigamous marriage to the politician cousin who believed in polygamy) and what Sidonie Smith calls "voices from the margins" appropriating "androcentric fictions as their templates for self-expression" (Smith 1987 174). The interwoven histories of Zara and Louisa might also gesture towards their moral laxity in these "guilty" attachments but Manley's satirical point is only partly to call into question their feeble reason or lack of judgement. Manley's detailed descriptions of the seductive tactics employed by their undoers demonstrate the young women's bodies and lives crossed by the cynical chiasmus of a reciprocal political equation that summarizes the "violent" crux in the elder brother's life: "he held it lawful for a Man to attain by any Methods, either Pleasure or Riches; he was violent in the pursuit of both; quitting his Interest for nothing but Pleasure, and his Pleasure for nothing but Interest" (486). Like Behn and Astell, who, in Janet Todd's words, "looked back nostalgically to a gracious age before greed and selfishness became the order of the day," Manley's satire in this episode (and repeatedly throughout Atalantis) stresses the vulgar commercialism of those systems that undermine traditional standards of honour and virtue, and in fostering the violent pursuit of both Interest and Pleasure, reduce human beings to mere commodities (Todd 1989 17).

Although each "undone" by the brothers, Louisa and Zara are also within putative reach of sanctuary offered by female figures. These would seem to be potential sources of help, but this either fails to materialize, is misread or is unsought because of the prevailing sexual economy. The "amorous" Hernando Volpone's

"beautiful Ward" Louisa, who is "brought up in the House with his Lady, who had a great kindness for her," is seduced under her surrogate mother's roof and succumbs in spite of that lady's protective presence or "great kindness" (486). The perversion of paternal protection into patriarchal possession of the dependent female—which (Manley reminds the reader) causes the Duke "terrible Conflicts" as "before described" in the story of Charlot beginning this volume—is here accomplished with unhesitating sangfroid. "Indefatigable" in his determination to divert the passage of Louisa's young life from a landscape of "Orizons and Devotion" cultivated by "his Lady" to one of "Pleasure" forced by himself, Hernando succeeds in reshaping his ward's spiritual, emotional and physical world, "to make her other ways," while pretending an innocence that belies his intent, "then it would be as it were undone" immediately under his wife's nose (488,487).

Here, as in other of Manley's fictions, the female body suggestively conforms to the landscape, fitting or reflecting the lie of the land and, like the landscape garden, held in check, shaped or used to suit the proprietory hand of the male landowner.[14] Thus, in order for Hernando to "Triumph over his Wife, whom he hated, as well as over Louisa, whom he lov'd," he resolves to pursue a program of careful cultivating, clipping and shaping to "undermine that seemingly invincible Chastity" the preservation of which his wife has "encourag'd" in their ward (487). Following the path of a destructive passion for ownership, a "Love" that is not "true Love"—for, as Manley stresses, "if it were but true Love, 'twould seek the good of the Person belov'd"—Hernando sets out to claim this virgin territory as his own.

While Louisa is represented in images that might just as well apply to an unconquered landscape, naturally "cool and innocent," Hernando is linked to the violence of a land-hungry tyrant in images that show him erring from "Reason" and unable to suppress the "irresistable Tyrant," the "Love" that will "trample upon all Obstacles" to re-shape the object of his desiring gaze, and "to make her otherways" than innocently unclaimed (488).

Within the appropriately delineated boundaries of his estate, Hernando is shown repeatedly taking "little Freedoms" and "pretty Liberties," trampling over ethical and corporeal borders to gain access to the ultimate form of his desire, who, although already within reach of ownership, is not yet fully possessed:

> The little Freedoms that were permitted inflam'd him; he could not pass near her without trembling; when he did but touch her Hand, his Blood flush'd in his Face; sometimes he would ravish a Kiss, in the way of play, but then he was lost in pleasure; he took all occasions for those pretty Liberties; her Bed-side was not refus'd him when he us'd to view her there in a Morning, he would fix his sparkling wishing Eyes, cross his Arms, and sigh in such a tender manner that Louisa must have been very ignorant, not to have discern'd a Mystery in such a Behaviour. (488)

Predictably, Hernando gains entry to the object of his lustful gaze (those hungrily "wishing Eyes"), through the garden window on a warm night after preparing this hot bed of "Pleasure" through a "learned" (but nonethless heated) "Discourse" on (what he argues is) the naturally sanctioned state of polygamy (491); representing "the lawfulness of double Marriages" as "the Law of Nature," Manley's text mocks Lockean and nonconformist discourse.

Also echoing Dryden's ironic opening lines to Absalom and Achitophel (on the promiscuous embodiment of natural man "Before Polygamy was made a Sin" in the monarch who "Scatter'd his Maker's image through the land"), Hernando argues adroitly for concubinage, "in his eloquent Manner," through a two-page long "Harangue" (491). Manley's acid parody of nonconformist logic mimics the cold Whig voice arguing that "Polygamy" is intended for the natural purposes of male "Capacity," providing a method of avoiding the "Inconveniencies" found "in any one Wife" for "Man who possess'd an uninterrupted Capacity of propagating the Specie [sic]" (491). Manley then shows the false word made flesh, neatly juxtaposing Hernando's argument for territorial expansion—"scarce a Man (but himself) that had the Capacity to uphold his Pleasures abroad, but went in search of 'em"—with his prompt enactment of this urge (491-92). Hernando sends wife and ward to the country while he prepares to indulge his Pleasures abroad in a moonlight assault on the virgin territory of Louisa's body. Entering the metonymic garden at the "back-Gate" just "past Midnight" and armed with a "Master-key that open'd all Doors," he finds his way into his ward's "Chamber" by way of the garden's "grassy Walks" and "two large folding-Windows" that "open'd into the Garden" (494). This coyly suggestive language enacts the seducer's covert entry into his beloved's abandoned (to "a fit of Swooning") and thus available form.

With all the finesse of a seasoned campaigner, Hernando swiftly accomplishes his conquest of the terrified young woman whose evident "Disorder" at his rapid entry with "but one jump into the Room" causes her to swoon with "trembling and

fright" (495). Following the received wisdom that "in those Cases, the best Remedy was to lay her at her length," he takes her "without resistance" in a text-book manoeuvre that carries her "in his Arms" to the place of triumph, "the Bed," where this new land is virtually denuded and prepared for the final "Battery" (497):

> . . . he carry'd her to the Bed, and slipping off her Night-gown, with as much Modesty as the Circumstance would permit, he threw the Bed open, laid her in, and cover'd her up very handsomly, then cast himself down upon the Bed-cloaths, his Face to hers, where he could not resist the Pleasure of paying himself in Kisses for his pains; this, and what was done before, recall'd the young Beauty; she remov'd him gently with her hand, and turning that way, Oh Sir, says she, what are you about? Do you mean to ruin me? (495)

Manley's choice of imagery in this passage describes Hernando's triumphantly masterful, controlling actions—"taking her," "he carry'd her," "slipping off her Night-gown," "he threw," "laid her," "cover'd her"—while revealing an underlying feminine reality in the dysphoric experience of being mastered and controlled. Metaphorically subversive, this scene shows "the young Beauty" objectified and trapped in the containing space of the bed which (with sepulchral overtones) is thrown open; then she is "laid" in and "cover'd" up "very handsomly"; thus Louisa is shrouded in the "Bed-cloathes" which, although Hernando is ironically described as being "unable to resist the Pleasure of paying himself in Kisses for his pains," clearly hold her down so that she is actually "unable to resist" his advances.

After this initial incursion "by that dangerous Contact," the seduction process (persuading Louisa to espouse polygamy along with Hernando himself in a sham marriage) is presented as a battle for possession (496). Despite Louisa's abject avowal that "her Honour and Chastity were above her Life," Hernando is shown

ruthlessly engaged in his final conquering manoeuvres so that "The Battery was renew'd against that piece of Fortification" and "to perswade her to the lawfulness of Poligamy, he found that must be the Mine that was to blow up her Chastity" (497). Effectively eliding "Chastity" with body and self, these violent images of the "Battery" and the "Mine" that would blow up this vital aspect of herself that she claims to be "above her Life" (497) demonstrate Louisa's destruction at the hand of her seducer no less palpably than Zara's dramatic self-destruction which follows. Thus linked by the severity of their fates, the two misguided young women are also connected by the corruption of their seducers, who collaborate in deception just as they correspond in vice. To this end, joining forces with a brother who, as Manley indicates in one of her many emphatic parentheses, is "much about the same pitch in Devotion and very well match'd for their Morals," Mosco plays the farcical role of a "false Priest" (complete with "another colour'd Wig," "Plum-stones in his Mouth," and "speaking a la Francoise" [sic]) in the sham wedding that completes Hernando's "Battery" against his ward's chaste scruples (499).

Once thus joined, the passion paradox operates in a familiar way (frequently reported by Manley throughout these narratives) to leave Louisa obsessed with a "Husband" to whom "she devoted all her Thoughts and Wishes, her whole Days and Nights," while he unaccountably "cools" towards her (501). Manley's argument that woman's emotional life is almost invariably out of time with man's mercenary "Interest" projects an intrinsically tragic hopelessness for heterosexual union, for biology would seem to indicate no emotional common ground between the sexes:

> . . . the same unaccountable thing that cools the Swain, more warms the Nymph: Enjoyment (the death of Love in all Mankind) gives Birth to new Fondness, and doating Extasies in the Women; they begin later, with-held by Modesty, and by a very ill tim'd Oeconomy, take up their Fondness exactly where their Lover leaves it. (501)

This convincing psychological assessment of the shifting power balance implied by passion's paradoxical warming and cooling is presented in language which emphasizes the apparent hopelessness of a sexual economy that leaves women on the actuarial losing side. Manley's ironic focus on this "unaccountable thing" shows that biological difference is not accounted for in the uneven scale of sexual profiteering. Similarly, the image of an "ill tim'd Oeconomy," although parodic in its particular application to the profligate life of a corrupt politician and his mistress, suggests the kind of woeful imbalance that tips society's concerns away from the natural, nurturing feminine. This conjures up the kind of tragic desperation that recalls the Jacobean drama's repeated focus on being out of time as a pre-condition of tragedy, and what Tamyra in Bussy D'Ambois laments is for women "our false clock of life".[15]

The tragic implications of both this and its companion piece (about Zara and Mosco) are further manifested in the text by Manley's transitional device linking her observations on the "very ill tim'd Oeconomy" with the meaning of Zara's history. Stressing that her hypothesis is thus proved in Zara's story which itself is embodied in the figure of "the young Zara, a very pretty Girl," Manley begins this episode with the demonstrative pronoun:

> This was sufficiently prov'd by the young Zara, a very pretty Girl, whose Mother liv'd in the same Villa with Hernando, but so great a Bigot, that Zara had seen nothing but their own forbidding Crew of Sectaries: Her self was born with genteel Inclinations, and had

> something jantie in her Mien and Conversation; they did nothing but teize her for not conforming her self enough to their Manners. (501)

Within their satirical dig at the unnatural bigotry and condemnatory elitism exhibited by both Zara's mother and "their own forbidding Crew of Sectaries" in the carping at (and effective marginalization) of one of their own, these opening lines implicitly set up the issue of maternal or sisterly support which surfaces more than once in this cautionary tale.

Manley specifies that although Zara comes to the Mosco connection at a social disadvantage, she is clearly placed at a "considerable" financial advantage, for "she had eight thousand Crowns in her own Hands, which was more than three times as much to Ladies that dress and live in the World" (501). As with Louisa, Zara's not having lived "in the World" effectively renders her open to the advances of a polished Machiavellian operator such as Mosco, whose interest in the "pretty" Zara's corporeal form is not only matched but superseded by his interest in her financial form. As Manley demonstrates in the juxtaposition of sexual imagery with monetary imagery, Mosco's interest in this sheltered young woman has nothing to do with love, but is entirely to do with mercenary power: Mosco, she carefully points out, "was mightily taken with pretty Zara; he had not the command of Mony [sic] as his elder Brother had" (501). The verbal irony, of course, is that although Mosco is, as Manley puts it, "mightily taken with pretty Zara," the actuality is an inversion of that statement since it is Zara who is "mightily taken" by Mosco's "guilty Commerce" with her—an arrangement that is passionate on her side and entirely commercial on his. While she "took a fatal Passion for him," he both pretends "Business" in order to see her and

treats her as a business: "he it was that dispos'd of her Fortune, and made what wasts [sic] or improvements he saw good" (502). Again, with conscious irony, Manley shows the shabby truth beneath the slick political language of Whig mercantilism. Zara's body becomes equivalent to the coin of her fortune for she is quickly disposed of when the transaction threatens to be too costly, one of the "Trifles" no longer desired by Mosco's "obdurate Heart" (514, 511). His pragmatic dismissal of the unwanted goods (now one of those "Inconveniences" in Hernando's harangue) then effectively wastes her when she drowns, rejected and deranged, in the river.

Although forming a mutely simple background to the "troublesome Amour" that grips Zara's body and mind, the landscape (only briefly delineated by Manley) offers an implicit link between the young women and suggests a connecting feminine principle that exists in a state of nature, also contrasting with the mercenary constructions of the patriarchal political economy. Mirroring the figurative ties between body and land, Louisa and Zara meet in the garden. Just as an anthropomorphised landscape witnesses Louisa's abandonment to an illicit union that shapes her body with pregnancies and venereal disease ("the conscious Walks and Gardens all witness'd to their Passion"), Zara's desperate "Afflictions" unite her with "tender Louisa" in the garden that bears silent witness to their brief confederacy:

> She was one day at dinner at Hernando's, Mosco arriv'd unexpectedly; she was forc'd to withdraw to the Air of the Window in the next Room, or she had swooned away; tender Louisa follows to assist her, she even leaves her dinner to administer what was in her Power towards her recovery; they got together into the Garden, where, having no Witnesses but themselves, Zara no longer restrain'd her self, but gave way to a great Passion of Tears: when that was over, and Louisa had intreated her

> to let her know the cause of her Afflictions, and assur'd her of secresie. (503)

This natural flow of emotion enacted in Zara's "great Passion of Tears" hints at the unspeaking suffering of the Great Mother Earth (as embodied, for example, in the Marian visions of the Mater Dolorosa whose milk and tears, according to Kristeva, "re-establish the nonverbal")[16], particularly in the context of the need for "secresie" which also points to non-language. Yet here, in the comforting alliance with a "tender" fellow female, Zara can recover sufficient feminine "Power" to be her private, speaking self. Thus "assur'd . . . of secresie," Zara's words are freed, pouring forth naturally in an expression of complete humanity to explain how she has fallen and is now "the most lost undone Maid that ever liv'd," caught in a situation that afflicts her with a "Disease of Soul" (504).

No longer suffering in silence, Zara spills out the details of her undoing, which has been effected by the seductive power of Mosco's words to persuade: "yet has he a thousand, and a thousand times persuaded me, that his Passion was mutual" (503). Manley shows that although this manipulative ability to shape an alternative reality through the use of his persuasive powers marks Mosco as a successful seducer, Zara (as a victim would) still sees herself as responsible for the pain she suffers, since she has overstepped the bounds of feminine propriety by loving him first: "I even lov'd him before he distinguish'd me: I was the Agressor! I am the Sufferer!" (503). Here Manley focalizes Zara's inner world in a stream of confessional direct discourse that pleads the victim's point of view and acts as a politically involved apology for her adulterous role in "bestowing her guilty Affections upon a Person marry'd to

another"—the specified cause for that "Divine Vengeance" which punishes Zara so drastically and is announced by the narrator as the moral of the story (516). First to Louisa—who weeps "in Consort" at "hearing a Story so very parallel with her own" (504)—and then to Mosco himself, Zara offers her confession which combines a plaintive array of emotional responses from devotion to despair. Initially Zara explains to Louisa that within the social code of her religious sect, love and marriage are entirely a matter of trust:

> mutual Love and Consent makes a Marriage; we stand not in need of the Priest's Ceremony; when once we give our Faith it is inviolable; it would be a mortal Crime to swerve from it. (504)

In this carefully slanted gloss of the Quaker position (as interpreted by a troubled girl), through Zara's curious acknowledgement that Mosco's "leaving his Wife to cohabit with me, (as he has a thousand times promis'd) is sufficient Ceremony," Manley uncovers defective thinking. The ironic impact of Zara's ingenuously misplaced appeal to an ideal of "mutual Love and Consent," and a "Faith" that is "inviolable" shows that all these words have suspect meanings. While Zara invokes "inviolable Faith" her bold violation of the boundaries that signify Mosco's marriage undermines her own assessment of what faith means. In its careless transgression of socially transcribed borders, Zara's appeal undoes itself. Absurdly, she cites "mortal crime" even as she is placing herself at the mercy of someone whose only faith is in the interest of commercial exchange, or Pleasures, for which he circumvents all accepted bounds of legal or moral reponsibility, making his own rules as he goes

along. Through these confusingly mixed meanings, Manley shows Zara's unhealthy inability to grasp actuality.

From all this a patent psycho-sexual disequilibrium emerges. Manley's politico-moral purpose focuses the narrative in destruction, demonstrating that the explicitly dubious actions of a faithless deceiver and the implicitly dubious thinking of a sectarian upbringing push this young woman into a marginalized position where "Disease," "Disorders," or even madness are ultimately incompatible with life in any social or spiritual sense. Thus pushed to the brink of her accepted social self, and therefore almost beside herself with the uncomprehending pain of the believer who has been betrayed, or the epistemological puzzlement of a narratee who has read a fiction as actuality, Zara loses the self's inherent power to control or order the world around her. "I am not Mistress of my self," she declares, entering a space of disordered "Uneasiness": the sick psychological place of obsessional passion (504). To Louisa's sympathetic (but similarly disordered) ear, Zara concludes:

> . . .I am not Mistress of my self! You saw it was not in my Power to suppress those Disorders his presence gave me. What must all the World think of my Folly? am not I mad? 'tis impossible I shou'd live under this Disease of Soul! I must put an end to all my Uneasiness: But alas! that is not to be done without putting an end to my Life. (504)

Manley's analysis of this troubled state of mind (which, she points out, has visibly physical consequences) anatomizes socio-political systems with satirical acumen. Her linking of the two stories allows her to demonstrate how any potentially restorative union of the oppressed (the two young women in this situation) is in itself disordered by their joint inability to exercise judgement sound enough to help them recuperate.

> Louisa's Love-sick Heart was languishing with the same Distemper. Zara had found out a Confident who lov'd as much as she, and therefore was not like to give her any good Advices towards her recovery: however, she said and did all that was in her power to comfort her, she ev'n advis'd her to absent her self from Mosco, if it were true, that he was really become unkind, a generous Disdain ought to be her Cure; but probably she might mistake, Business, unlucky cross Affairs, might make her misinterpret him. (504-5)

Applied to both Louisa and Zara, Manley's disease imagery signals a shared inability to process information or read the signs clearly as both cause and effect of a social malady. Louisa's subjunctives enact the confused motion of the mind-body question: either the "Love-sick Heart" causes the "Distemper" of dependence, or the misguided ill "Advices" of dependence "might" cause her to "mistake" or "misinterpret" which in turn causes the "languishing" of the "Love-sick Heart," each revolution of meaning creating perplexity ad nauseam. Pointedly focalized, the narrative suggests an antagonism in this cycle indicated by the intrusion of the Volpone brothers who act as interfering agents, contaminating the process by altering the young women's perceptions with the language of deception. Although Zara knows her actions are "Follies," she blames Mosco for setting out to "encourage the Follies of a Maid that might have been happy, had she never seen you," implying the mere sight of him is a significant cause of her pathological "Disease of Soul" (505).

Manley's ordering of the text reveals that Louisa and Zara are "not like to give" or take "any good Advices towards" their "recovery"—effectively a recuperation of the whole self—because they are socially isolated, indoctrinated and fragmented by the dubious rhetoric of patientia—the questionable "Wisdom" of women who wait for abusive men to make their emotional lives complete, "to give

way to those Cruel Hours, and wait with patience for the Tender" (505). Focusing on the interplay of language and the self, Manley shows that when Zara is pleading her cause with her seducer she argues for her own "Merit" in her expression of love for one she has deemed "seem'd so meritorious" (506). Similarly, in wanton desperation to be validated by his "Sanction for my Passion" Zara offers to give up every part of herself, including her own and her mother's fortune, to Mosco, who will thus be given mastery over the two women: "You have but to cohabit with me to make you Master of hers, as well as mine" (506). Her pleas convey both Zara's limited exposure to the political power of language and the fragmentation of her inner self that threatens to destroy her because she has depended on Mosco's unreliable "Word" and her own disordered reasoning (506).

> Persons of our Persuasion, promise nothing but what they are sure to perform; you well know their very Word to them is a Law; I was never use to converse with any Deceivers, therefore you need not wonder I took so little precaution against you: Upon the whole, if you acquit your self as you ought, there is none I wou'd change Conditions with. You have screwd me, by your delays, up to the very height; you must now stop, or I break and fall to pieces: (506-7)

Manley's choice of language in this final plea from Zara to her adversary invests it with an almost biblical but hectic tone of paranoid intensity. Through Zara's wilful disregard of the evidence before her that Mosco is indeed a deceiver (in spite of which she perversely entrusts him with the power to stop her falling to pieces), Manley indicates that Zara is not only fundamentally misguided but also sufficiently unschooled in the game of persuasion (or life) to invite her own ruin by relying on manifestly untrustworthy words as law.

Apart from the disease and destruction imagery enacted climactically in the threat that Mosco's misinformation will shatter Zara who must "break and fall to pieces" if the uncertainty continues, the outward effects of these simultaneous deceptions are immediately emblematized in the bodies of the two young women. In each case, Manley emphasizes the physical manifestations of sexual betrayal which signal an overriding abuse of power—both men are in positions of political power when they take advantage of these younger women. Publicly revealing the private shame of her sham marriage, the signs of Louisa's subjugation are writ large in the shape of her body that "prov'd with Child" for "she grew apparently big" (507). Despite Hernando's assurances that he will hide her away in "a House" where she "shou'd be accountable to none but him for her Conduct," these very limits on her conduct—the marriage, the pregnancies, the isolation (like "House" arrest)—together with her acceptance of a double life in the polygamous relationship ultimately destroy her emotionally (for she "was Heart-broke at his Inconstancy") and physically:

> . . . but in her Taste of Love she was nice and delicate; for as she had wholly devoted her Heart and Person to him, she believ'd his, both by Merit and by Promise, were wholly due to her; but having receiv'd so fatal a Proof of his wandering from both, she took it to Heart, which joining to an ill Habit of Body, carry'd her from this Life, a Martyr of that Passion to which she had been devoted; persisting to the last moment in an Opinion, that in regard to Hernando, she had done nothing but her Duty. (516-17)

This mind-body imagery links the cognitive jolt of "so fatal a Proof of his wandering" (erring, that is, from both the word and the deed of devotion) with the somatized response inevitably occasioned in the disease metaphor of "Uneasiness" (504) that invades a person of already questionable disposition, thus rendering her rather

pathetically "a Martyr of that Passion to which she had been devoted," psychologically and physiologically ruined.

Just as Louisa has "indulg'd the enchanting Poyson, which destroy'd her Fame, and intoxicated her Reason," Zara remains similarly "intoxicated" by the same "enchanting Poyson" which leads to her own more rapid destruction (509). What is to Mosco merely an expression of "soft Appetite" which has turned to "loathing" is to "the afflicted Zara" a morbid disorder which affects her as an addiction (509). The effect of her "several" letters written in pursuit of Mosco is reflected in his foreboding wish that "any favourable Accident would transport her to a more happy Region" (509). This parallels Zara's own death wish which Manley shows her already enacting in thought and language, and which, as Manley demonstrates through her placement of images in the text, has a direct physical impact.

> She perpetually talk'd of dying, but he knew that very few deceas'd of that Distemper. The Flower of Beauty apparently faded, neither the Rose nor Lillies retain'd their native Color: Her Dress she neglected; Diversions were no more; Sorrow, nay Despair, were her inseperable Companions; all she hoped and wish'd was, that they would quickly terminate her pain. (509-510)

For Zara, in addition to the uncertainty of her position, the tension between speaking out and remaining silent is what has "screw'd" her "up to the very height" (506). When her attempts to speak out and express herself in writing letters to Mosco are met with a silent rebuke, Zara experiences a figurative death. Associated here with an emotional upheaval, the traditional flower images of roses and lillies that blazon love's charming face in Petrarchan sonnets are reversed to suggest both the unromantic irony of Zara's situation (charmed but no longer charming) and the

connection between body and landscape which is to take on an even more ironic twist with her suicidal plunge into the river.

Zara's final pathetic threat of speaking out is contained in a letter which announces her resolve to make her "Woes" public and claim her rightful status as "Wife" to the "too cruel" Mosco:

> Tir'd out with Love and Disdain, too cruel Friend and Husband, I have resolv'd to suffer no more in private, but will proclaim my Woes, and your Delusions, even to the Woman the World believes your Wife, tho' I only am such, and will not fail to make my claim within two Days, at Angela; if before that time be expir'd, thou dost not comfort and relieve thy affectionate, and most despairing,
>
> ZARA. (510)

The language in Zara's letter reveals confusion and ambiguity with every line that spells out the crux she finds herself in. Neither active nor passive in this paradoxical relationship with a man who is described by the oxymoron "too cruel Friend and Husband," Zara tries in vain to place herself firmly in a situation where, Manley demonstrates, there is no firm foundation either in political word or deed and Zara is sinking in uncertainty. The "Love and Disdain" which have tired her out are not clearly established as his or hers; the "Delusions" are similarly confusing in attribution, for his delusions are manifestly hers in the context of this epistolary testimony to her distorted perception that she is the "Wife" who "will not fail" to make her "claim" to a man who is, contrary to her claim, neither "Friend" nor "Husband," and will neither "comfort" nor "relieve" her. Zara's letter also lays out the central contradiction of her belief that she is Mosco's wife and that to say she will announce this has the sanction of a threat to bring him to heel. The alternating

images of weariness and resolve, private suffering and public proclamation, truth and falsehood, comfort and despair, combine to enact the maelstrom of deranged emotional and disordered physical responses she suffers as the victim of socially-sanctioned exploitative systems.

Rendered in ironic litotes, the effects of Zara's letter on Mosco show him assessing the "inconvenience" of her action or reaction in an appetitive sense as something unpalatable: "Mosco could by no means relish a Visit of that nature; he rais'd not any great Ideas of delight from such a Scene . . . he resolv'd to undeceive her, tho' it might possibly take her Affairs out of his Hands, and with it inconvenience his" (511). The massed negatives of these phrases—"by no means," "rais'd not any," "to undeceive her," "inconvenience his"—show Mosco ever the calculating politician weighing up how little he must give or might lose if he plays his cards correctly in the game of shady dealings. The threat of public exposure thus prompts Mosco into immediate action. After he "took Horse, and arriv'd the same Night at the Villa," Zara is briefly restored to her former self—"'twas as if she had never been in pain" (511). This reference, however, is only a fleeting glimpse of her external reaction, juxtaposed significantly with the crisp catalogue of events that signals Mosco means business in concluding the deception to his advantage: "She told him he must lie there that Night: He said nothing to contradict her. They supp'd with her Mother, who afterwards withdrew to order the Linen for his Bed" (511). Zara's mother, convinced "at length to consent" by her daughter's "Despair and Melancholy" to Mosco's proposal that he will this night begin the cohabitation officially sanctioned

as marriage by their sect, is in the peculiar position of facilitating his deception by unquestioningly accepting him in the house—the mother's withdrawal to order the linen for his bed (in a brisk routine of bedding and wedding) adding further emphasis to the impression that Zara goes as a lamb to the slaughter, isolated from the maternal comfort or domestic felicity represented in her mother's actions.

Pointedly turning from Zara's concerns, Manley immediately focalizes the narrative in Mosco's vulpine considerations of a situation in which he recognizes his victim's suffering "in continual torture" but continues to play out the game to his satisfaction regardless of her torment (511). Laid out in the metaphor of "the Banquet" (suggesting a parodic inversion of the traditional lover's banquet of the senses), Mosco's predatory and appetitive interest in the tender morsel for whom—her "Youth and Charms" no longer appealing to his jaded palate—he now has "so strong an Aversion" is detailed as a coldly pragmatic enquiry into the cause and effect of "Satiety and Loathing" (511):

> He ask'd himself whence it came, that a Person of her Youth and Charms, with all that's endearing in the Sex, excess of Truth, and excess of Love, could not in the least sway his obdurate Heart to a return? He found the fatal secret, he had been happy, and that prevented him from being still so; Satiety and Loathing succeeded; his Reason could not preside over his Appetite; he could eat no more however delicate was the Banquet, and therefore it must be remov'd: 'Twas hard to tell a Lady so that had oblig'd him, but it was ten times harder for her to suffer in continual torture. (511)

Manley's deliberate placement of Mosco's inner reckonings enacts the ruthless finality of his perception that this young woman is merely an object to be consumed—"it"—and one, moreover, which "must be remov'd," thus effectively

modifying any apparent consideration for Zara's feelings against which the statement is juxtaposed. The effect of this juxtaposition in a seemingly random stream of focalized thought is that the implied meaning of the apparent altruistic rationale behind his final "Resolution" is subtly reversed, exposing a fraud: when the "Banquet" dish no longer pleases the "Appetite" it is clearly "ten times harder" for him to suffer her continued presence in his life.

Always mindful of the political ramifications of his actions or the revelatory power of Zara's words, Mosco asks her with bluffing subjunctive politesse "if they shou'd take a Walk by the River-side," the tentative "if" and "should" undercut by his determination to escape the house in the expectation of exposure: "and he, in the first Gust of her Passion, should be exposed as well as her self" (511,512). For Zara "her self" the walk presents a landscape that seems particularly inviting "by the pale Glimm'rings of the Moon, and the agreeable no[i]se that arose from the gentle Dashes of the Water," but the natural beauty of the scene is undone by the underlying split between Zara's touching but ominously heated emotional response to Mosco, and Mosco's coldly calculated distance (512). Manley constructs the dramatic irony of this scene around the reader's awareness that despite Zara's clinging firmly onto Mosco's body for physical and emotional support, "Leaning of [sic] his Arm, which she eagerly press'd, with the Raptures of a Passion over-joy'd," in a posture of loving togetherness, she is as patently isolated in a psychological "Solitude so affrighting" as the "Pensive and Forlorn" figure of Virtue, revealed in sorry alienation from "the Lovers of this Age" on the second and third pages of this first volume (274,275).

Seen in the context of Manley's opening salvo against the "Diabolical way of Argument" which separates body from mind or heart, objectifies the female body and leads to the ruinous fragmentation that only a utopian "noble free-born love" can mend, this episode takes on a disruptive political meaning beyond the more obvious moral implications about Zara's "guilty Affections" (275, 516).

In the devastating scene that develops from Mosco's argued rejection of Zara's notion that they can enter into "such a Marriage" as the proposed bigamous cohabitation, Manley details the impact on the mind and body of a victim who, as her abuser declares in spurious self-justification, is young enough not to "know the World" and is "ignorant of Mankind" sufficiently to have believed a ploy concocted entirely for his interest, "only to allow your Virtue that pretence for yielding" (512). Through Mosco's "Diabolical way of Argument," Manley examines how this politician's specious logic twists the reason for his deception into a dismissal of the solid promise of their union as "an airy Notion," and then adds insult to injury in his admonitory conclusion that "no wise Woman reckons upon the performance of those extravagant things that are said to gain her" (513). Manley's choice of mercantile imagery again intimates that in this savagely uncertain socio-sexual economy, the commerce of inequality means no woman can "reckon upon" any "extravagant" return when once she is gained or possessed by a man. Just as the meanings of Mosco's words shift and disintegrate, Zara's world simultaneously falls apart, her reason snaps and she becomes a living embodiment of the allegorical Virtue who introduces this volume, Zara's inner and outer disintegration recalling Virtue's statement that she is

condemned to wander "Exploded and Alone," flying "to the utmost Verge" (277). Manley shows Zara on a realistically tragic brink:

> He was going on, when Zara not able to hear any more, sunk upon her Knees, and catching hold of his Coat, with both her Hands, interrupted him thus, Kill me upon the instant; I have something more than the Pains of Death upon me; whatsoever are call'd the Pains of Hell and Damnation, I feel yet more, Words cannot express 'em. (513)

Thus unhearing, unseeing, all feeling, Zara is visibly "Exploded," alienated and transformed into a fragmented entity. Caught somewhere between action and inaction, life and death, "not able to hear" and "sunk upon her knees," but yet "catching hold of his Coat, with both her hands," and feeling more pain than "the Pains of Death," she forms a twisted sign of liminality which suggests the disruptively feminine in a living paradox: while portrayed as intensely human at this point, she is somehow also a contradiction in terms: an abstraction of pain personified. Although the statement that words cannot express pain is a universal acknowledgement of unspeakable agony, the emphasis in this entire episode is on the deep uncertainties enfolded in formal language, the fractured layers of meaning beneath smoothly polished political surfaces, the unspeakable disorder within a sick social structure that makes women suffer in actuality but prevents them from speaking out politically.

This story of Zara (drawn for political reasons by Manley from Spencer Cowper's trial for the murder of the Quaker heiress Sarah Stout) thus gives flesh to the allegorical beginnings of Atalantis in its wrenchingly dramatic conclusion. Constituting an ironic parallel to the opening scene which shows Virtue "Disconsolate, Abandon'd," and separated from the "Commerce of this despicable

Race," seeking solace in a feminized seascape, where the natural, sympathetic rhythms of the waters offer release from her "Woes," the scene of Zara's drowning also (paradoxically) brings Manley's narrative full circle. Zara's "Secret History" (marked in the legal records of 1698, before Manley's fleshing out of the story eleven years later in Atalantis) bodies forth the key philosophical and political questions raised by the superlunary goddess figures, and provides troubling answers. For Zara, in contradistinction to Virtue, there is no hope of salvation or return to society, and the waters of the river offer a final escape from her "Woes" in what she perceives as the "Ruin, Despair, Destruction, Death, eternal Misery" of self-immolation.

> Here he threw abroad her Hands, and broke from her; she fell her length upon the Ground, then getting up as fast as she could, strove to follow him, but he was at too great a distance. Revenge and Despair work'd her up to the height of Lunacy: she tore off her Hood, her Coif; her Gown that hung loosly about her, trampling it under Foot, and calling out after him, Turn, turn but a moment; turn and see what Love and Rage can do. (514)

Already described as physically flung apart or stretched, Zara literally enacts a ritual dismantling of the socially constituted self when she rips off her clothes, the insignia of her social, spiritual and sexual subjection.

Yet, in her final act of alienation Zara gains a frenzied kind of power "Rage" and "Revenge" working her up to a state of lunacy, she exclaims in her outrage "behold what Zara can perform" as she hurls execrations against "this Barbarian" and "the Traitor," then flings herself out into the river after invoking all the forces of "Heaven, Earth and Hell" to "revenge" her, asking to return significantly disembodied in a ghostly form to haunt her deceiver with endless reproaches:

> Let me mingle among all the Traitor's Pleasures; let him attain to no Honours but what may be blasted by the remembrance of Zara; let him reproach himself; may the World for ever reproach him; let me, a Ghost, pursue the Traitor with never-ending Reproaches: Receive me, Oh hospitable Flood! into thy cold Bosom; receive a devoted Wretch whose Flame thy Waters can only quench—Here she flounc'd with all her strength, into the River, to the last moment persisting in a desire of speedy Death: She held her Breath, and was immediately stifled, without swallowing any of the Water. (515)

Zara's lunatic death, enacted with desire of a "speedy" outcome and accomplished through a watery passage which the body enters "without swallowing any of the Water," implies a telling inversion of childbirth imagery. The universal paradox of this forced death in a young life presents a conflicted image similar to "the Mortification of seeing 'em expire as soon as they began to be" (II 1) and suggests a complex of associations in the creative, transformative, sometimes destructive, power of the female body that prefigures Manley's opening to the later Memoirs of Europe. Zara's imprecation that she return "a Ghost" operates effectively on various levels—diegetic in the episode, hypodiegetic in the series of narratives, and extradiegetic in the satire as a whole—for the ghostly imprint of her drowning provides a palimpsestic comment (subtly pursuing "the Traitor with never-ending Reproaches" through satirical exposure) on all the seduction stories, whether they end in ruin or not.

In a bitterly ironic comment on political actuality for women, Manley situates Zara in a manifestly more troubled, marginal position than the allegorical figure of Virtue whose "Pensive and Forlorn" presence marks the beginning of her enquiry into the state of the "Race" (I 274). Zara's demise provides bleak answers to Astrea's

quest, announced in the opening line of Atalantis, "to see if Humankind were still as defective, as when she in a Disgust forsook it" (I 273). Whereas Virtue has found sad solace in the earth's "sonorous Waves" and "resounding of the Rocks," Zara's more realistically "defective" psycho-sexual state means that she has already suffered an inner death, "immediately stifled," when she casts herself into the maternal waters' "hospitable Flood" (I 277, 515). Overturning the cornucopia of luxuriantly fragrant gardens and gloriously feminized landscapes which figure so provocatively in her stories, Manley's own "Revolution of Thought" that characterizes Astrea's decision to come down to earth and examine "Hypocrisy, Politicks, Politeness and Vanity" (I 273) concludes with the enigma that Zara's body becomes one with the earth mother's "cold Bosom" only in death (I 515). Manley's manifold political purpose is never more clear than in this emphatic closure to the first volume of Atalantis where the climactic image of Zara's "stifled" corpse embodies, in an ironic reflection of the "Mortification" that kills mother with child, the sometimes deadly issue of sexual politics and the unarguably real consequences of seduction for the naive woman who is entrapped by the trammel of political language. Although Manley's satire asks us to examine all abuses of power or departures from Virtue, her feminocentric narratives such as the story of Zara suggest the need for women (who stand to lose so much by the seductive words of love's snares and masquerades) to exercise judgement and seek independence: "no wise Woman," Manley argues, can afford to believe "the extravagant things that are said to gain her" (I 513).

NOTES

1. See Sarah Stone's Complete Practice of Midwifery 1737.

2. The words from Longinus are quoted by Doody from Dionysus Longinus on the Sublime: Translated from the Greek, with Notes and Observations, and Some Account of the Life, Writings and Character of the Author by William Smith, A.M. (London: Printed by J. Watts; And Sold by W. Innys and R. Manby, 1739) 78-80.

3. The "Sublime" as a rhetorical concept was known in France and Boileau's Traité de l'art poetique was known in England from its publication in 1674. John Dennis's Miscellanies (1693) described alpine landscapes as that "in which Horrour can be joyn'd with Harmony." Addison's treatment of the Sublime in Pleasures of the Imagination was perhaps the most important of the period. It mentions the oxymoronic notion of "a pleasing kind of Horrour" and "the Strangeness and Novelty" that amuses the reader's Imagination (419). In Spectator 421, where Addison discusses how the Imagination is "as liable to Pain as Pleasure," he quotes Ovid's Metamorphoses (a central text at the time), Book IV:

> Ignotis errare locis, ignotis videre
> Flumina gaudebat; studio minuente laborem.

Addison's translation links the pleasure and the pain thus:

> He sought fresh Fountains on a foreign Soil.
> The Pleasure lessened the attending Toil (Addison)

4. Anne Finch's lines, so much admired by Pope (who adapted them to read, less intimately, "Die of a rose in aromatic pain" in his Essay on Man l. 200), are from The Spleen. A Pindaric Poem. Here she catalogues the effects of Spleen on the senses: "Through thy black jaundice I all objects see." She continues:

> No armed Sweets, until thy Reign,
> Cou'd shock the Sense, or in the Face
> A flusht, unhansom Colour place.
> Now the Jonquille o'ercomes the feeble Brain;
> We faint beneath the Aromatick Pain. (Miscellany Poems)

Finch's "Progress of Life" is included in the text of Atalantis's first volume, with the accompanying recommendation that the poet "has written a great many

pretty things" and "These Verses . . . have met with abundance of Applause, and therefore I recommend 'em to your Excellencies perusal" (I 440).

In the second volume of Atalantis Manley includes "A Hymn to Jupiter" as a witty objet trouve. Virtue finds it lying on the ground: "Ha! there lies a Paper upon the Ground, what is it? 'Tis imperfect, it forms the conclusion of a foregoing Poem, inscrib'd A Hymn to Jupiter. Pray read it, and let it be to the Father of Gods and Men, as our Morning Orizons and Adorations." To this Intelligence replies, "Oh, I know it! I assure your Excellencies 'tis an admir'd Piece, and wrote by the same Lady, whose Genius had Yesterday the Honour to be approv'd by Astrea in those Verses I shew'd her, call'd The Progress of Life" (691-695).

5. Doody also points out that "The Augustans felt the connection of 'high' and 'low,' of glorious and disgusting, beautiful and dull. Their sense of these connections is intimately related to their connection of pain and pleasure, and importantly concerned also in their sensitive apprehension of the powers of metamorphosis" (The Daring Muse 176).

6. Nancy J. Vickers discusses the blazon in Shakespeare's Lucrece, paying particular attention to the interconnections of display and ownership. She observes that "Rape is the price Lucrece pays for having been described" (214). See Nancy J. Vickers "'This Heraldry in Lucrece' Face'" in The Female Body in Western Culture, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P.), 209-222.

7. Susan Staves demonstrates that marriage was the method of keeping women within this socio-economic system of property transfer from one male generation to another. See Married Women's Separate Property in England.

8. Mary Astell objected strenuously to John Locke's endorsement of conjugal power and along with Manley, Behn, and Barker looked back "nostalgically," as Janet Todd puts it, to "a gracious age before greed and selfishness became the order of the day"; Astell, like Manley emphatically royalist, also saw the mercantile credo "as a licence for selfishness and vulgarity and an immoral reduction of human beings and their relationships to physical commodities" (Todd 1989 17). Also see Astell and Elizabeth Thomas on "free-born maids" and Elizabeth Johnson the printer who speaks of "Violations on the Liberties of Free-born English Women" in the 1690s.

9. In "Placing the Female: The Metonymic Garden in Amatory and Pious Narrative, 1700-1740," April London takes up John Richetti's division of early eighteenth-century narrative into the "secular" or "religious" (101). She also argues that Manley's garden scene featuring Diana de Bedamore relies on a "tacit association between the features of the garden and a kind of physical and

psychological laxness" to invert "the relation between the mythic Diana and Acteon" (104). She continues:

> Diana de Bedamore is enveloped by shade, narcotized by scent, and embedded by flowers; un-self-consciously she adopts the receptive pose of the female considered as both sexual and aesthetic object. The reader in turn assumes the position of the absent Acteon, the secret observer of a forbidden scene; except, of course, that one sees not the active huntress but the helpless victim enclosed within sensuous nature. (104)

Rosalind Ballaster similarly argues that Manley's rhetoric "situates Diana as passive victim, indeed presents her to the reader's and her lover's gaze by analogy with the garden that frames her as a thing of nature to be exploited and shaped by man" (231). My reading of the episode differs in that I interpret Manley's presentation of Diana's role as a celebration of unimpeded "Nature" wherein the feminine principle (also suggested by Manley's allusion to the pagan goddess's powerful world) is briefly allowed its sway, only to be "shut up" within the confines of house built to "enclose" its "Beauty" and a marriage of convenience that effectively punishes Diana for her lusty self-expression (I 769, 752).

10. See Ann Rosalind Jones, "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric," in The Poetics of Gender, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia U. P. 1986) 76-9. Jones also points out that the ideal Renaissance woman was effectively a figure of silent inaction: "she was unseen, unheard, untouched, unknown—at the same time that she was obsessively observed" (79).

11. See also Sidonie Smith, A Poetics of Women's Autobiography, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U.P.,1987). Smith emphatically places "the two loci of woman's value as a wife in patriarchal culture" in honesty and chastity. She continues: "In order to ensure the legitimacy of patrilineal descent, the wife must give herself sexually only to her husband, and her word that she has done so must be believable. If either her sexuality or her word is suspect, the very structure of marriage and the order that it supports are threatened" (36).

12. See Patricia Meyer Spacks, Gossip (1986) 32.

13. Some details of the murder trial brought by the Quakers against Spencer Cowper and companions for the supposed murder of Sarah Stout are set out in Dolores Duff's Materials Toward a Biography of Mary Delariviere Manley (322-327):

> On the morning of March 14, 1698, the body of Sarah Stout was found caught in piles at the mouth of a millpond on the Priory River in Hertford, clad in apron and petticoats, mortgage money still in the apron pockets. (324)

A history of the case can be found in A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Year 1783, with Notes and Other Illustrations (London, 1816), XIII, 1172-11182, compiled by T.B. Howell.

14. Carole Fabricant points out that "the links between women and landscape, as they were commonly perceived and treated by poets, painters, and estate planners alike, expressed certain fundamental interconnections between aesthetics and ideology in eighteenth-century England" (109). She goes on to say that "the political terminology frequently employed in contemporary treatises on landscape gardening possesses more than metaphorical significance and comes to assume very special nuances when understood in light of the assumed sexuality of the land" (109-110). She argues with acuity that throughout the Spectator essays, Addison's language places women in a similar situation to that of the garden: "As 'lovely pieces of human nature' on display for 'their Male-Beholders,' they too are continually judged for their ability to gratify the eye and the senses. Moreover, women, like landscapes, are converted into paintings, into framed—hence ownable and 'possessable'—objects designed specifically for male scrutiny; as Addison puts it 'A virtuous Mind in a fair body is indeed a fine Picture in a good Light, and therefore it is no wonder that it makes the beautiful Sex all over Charms' [no. 243]" (116). "Binding and Dressing Nature's Loose Tresses: The Ideology of Augustan Landscape Design" in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture 8 (1979), ed. Roseann Runte, 109-135.

15. In George Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois (III.i) Tamyra recognizes her role as one of the "weak dames" trammeled by "th'whole work of nature" whose souls, unlike Bussy's confident male spirit which will be transcendent with light, cannot shine, trapped in clouds of flesh:

> Ay, every thought in our false clock of life
> Oftimes inverts the whole circumference.
> We must be sometimes one, sometimes another.
> Our bodies are but thick clouds to our souls,
> Through which they cannot shine when they desire.

This reference to the "false clock of life" associates Tamyra's tragic vision with that of Hieronymo or Anne Frankford before her, both of whom recognize being out of time as a pre-condition of tragedy. Within her observation is the

awareness that Tamyra's condition is decreed by the natural order: she is trapped in a female body and a feminine role which deny her Bussy's liberating exuberance. Like other female figures in plays of the period—even as far back as Marlowe's Tamburlaine which shows Zenocrate functioning jointly as Tamburlaine's love and loot—Tamyra acts as a foil to the extravagant hero and is seen as another commodity, another bloody emblem of 'mere' femininity.

16. In Stabat Mater Kristeva examines the paradoxical issues of maternity and femininity "in a civilization in which the consecrated (religious or secular) representation of femininity is subsumed under maternity" but also "repudiated or denied" and she refers to "this maternity" in land imagery as "an adult (male and female) fantasy of a lost continent" (99). She also clarifies her definition of "maternal" as an "ambivalent principle" that intertwines biology with language:

> By "maternal" I mean the ambivalent principle that derives on the one hand from the species and on the other hand from a catastrophe of identity which plunges the proper Name into that "unnameable" that somehow involves our imaginary representations of femininity, non-language, or the body. (100)

From The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman, 99-118.

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